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Troilus And Criseyde: A Study In Chaucer'S Narrative Technique

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TROILUS AND CRISEYDE:
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde is a narrative poem. As one surveys Chaucerian scholarship, however, one would suspect that the poem is a fountainhead of literary genres, giving rise to modern forms as well as tapping older ones. Chaucer calls it a Boethian tragedy (V, 1786), but others have labeled it a de casibus tragedy,[1] a medieval romance,[2] and a precursor of the modern novel.[3] Sanford Meech concludes, somewhat in despair, that it is sui generis,[4] since it is a combination of these genres. But generic classification by arbitrary comparison with similar forms engenders the pitfalls of half-truths and the entanglement of contradictions. How a work achieves its effect and thereby realizes its form ultimately determines what classification that work conforms to. The effect and form of

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[1] Willard Farnham, Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Drama (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936), pp. 137 ff.

[2] Karl Young, "Troilus and Criseyde as Romance," Publication of the Modern Language Association, LIII (1938), 38-63.

[3] George Lyman Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1915), pp. 109-112.

[4] Sanford Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1959), p. vi.

Troilus and Criseyde can best be perceived through an inductive analysis of the work as a *poem* and as a *narrative*.

Chaucer, like other writers of narrative, faces the problem of what to show and what to tell. His remarkable ability to show action forcefully has prompted critics to assess his dramatic skill. The realistic portrayal of his characters in *Troilus*--his perceptive insight into the psychology of their motives, his various yet always appropriate presentation of dialogue, and his brilliantly original conception of Pandarus--gives rise to a story overpowering in its dramatic force, so overpowering, in fact, that the underlying narrative which lends unity and significant meaning to the drama is often neglected. The narrator remains ever-present throughout the poem, viewing all that occurs, but is incapable of altering the fixed course of the drama. Omniscient yet impotent, he is an accurate and penetrating observer as helpless against the force of his own drama as is Troilus against the whims of Fortune and the power of Love. Unlike Troilus, however, he can to some extent control the narrative *presentation* of the story. Here, he *comments* on the action, expressing his sympathetic understanding; there, he *summarizes* action too painful to dramatize; here, perhaps, a sensuous *description*; elsewhere, an implied parallel or relevant allusion. Through these narrative techniques Chaucer thereby controls and unifies his

poem.

Dramatic presentation is limited by scenic structure: one episode follows another without the benefit of a narrator's comments, descriptions, or summaries. Narrative stories demand a narrator to relate the action and to convey an impression of it. Percy Lubbock regards such narrative presentations as pictorial rather than dramatic. He qualifies this distinction:

> The straight forward way to render it /a story/ would be for the narrator . . . to view the past retrospectively and discourse upon it, to recall and meditate and summarize. That is picture-making in its natural form, using its own method. But exactly as in drama the subject is distributed among the characters and enacted by them, so in picture the effect may be entrusted to the elements . . . and performed by these. The mind of the narrator becomes the stage, his voice is no longer heard. His voice is heard so long as there is narrative of any sort. . . his voice is heard, because in either case the language and intonation are his, the direct expression of his experience.[5]

Narrative technique distinguishes itself from dramatic technique, then, by the heard voice of the narrator when he comments, summarizes, or even describes. Although the movement -- the soul -- of his story is demonstrated in dramatic action, the author reveals his experience, his relationship to the story, most directly through the passages voiced by the narrator.

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[5]Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1929), pp. 255-256.

The poet, of course, can never disappear completely from his work; his presence is implied even when he chooses to hide behind the mask of a narrator. Chaucer's conscious decision to use a particular metaphor, to denote a significant allusion, to construct a relevant simile generate poetic effects and dimensions in the poem which complement and clarify the outer drama. As a poet, Chaucer may feel, perhaps, that he has greater freedom to express himself poetically in passages voiced by the narrator than in those spoken by dramatized characters within the story. Although Chaucer modifies Troilo and Criseida and even transforms Pandaro, only the narrator emerges thoroughly Chaucerian and shows little resemblance to his Italian counterpart. The narrator moved by yet removed from the dramatic action expresses sentiments more driectly controlled by the poet than by the demands of the drama.

Preoccupation with the dramatic structure of the poem has led critics to attribute apparent inconsistencies to Chaucer's carelessness rather than to their own inattention. Walter Clyde Curry, for example, calls the epilogue of Troilus and Criseyde "dramatically a sorry performance" and declares that "the poet, without having given the slightest hint of warning, suddenly denies and contradicts everything

that has gone before in the poem."[6] In the same vein, Professor Tatlock states, "The feeling in the Epilog is in no way foreshadowed at the beginning or elsewhere: it does not illumine or modify; it contradicts."[7] These observations may be true of the surface drama, but the underlying narrative configuration which emerges through the narrative voice consistently points to a re-evaluation of the courtly love which the story dramatically celebrates. Closer analysis of Chaucer's poetic and narrative techniques reveals this consistent theme and conscious intention.

Critical attention to Chaucer's narrative technique, however, has not been absent. Several works touch on general aspects of Chaucer's style and narrative method, of course, and passing remarks on these subjects dot the pages of comprehensive books generally dealing with Chaucer's poetry: Root's The Poetry of Chaucer, Kittredge's Chaucer and His Poetry, Baum's Chaucer: A Critical Appreciation, Malone's Chapters on Chaucer, Spiers's Chaucer the Maker, Tatlock's Mind and Art of Chaucer. But four particular studies deal exclusively with aspects of Chaucer's narrative

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[6]Walter Clyde Curry, "Destiny in Chaucer's Troilus," Publication of the Modern Language Association, XLV (1930), 168.

[7]John Strong Perry Tatlock, "Epilog of Chaucer's Troilus," Modern Philology, XVIII (1921), 636.

art. Claes Schaar's earlier work classifies types of summary narrative and traces their uses in Chaucer's general sources.[8] His later study utilizes the same approach to the classification, stylistic character, and sources of Chaucer's description, although his inclusion of psychological summary diffuses the study.[9] Charles Muscatine's extensive dissertation (later modified in his book, Chaucer and the French Tradition) recognizes Chaucer's fusion of two literary styles--the conventional the realistic--in the forms of speech presented in his poetry.[10] All of these works include discussion of Troilus and Criseyde only as part of their overall concern with Chaucer's poetry, and their primary concern is literary style rather than narrative construction. Sanford Meech's book, Design in Chaucer's Troilus, comes closest to approaching an exhaustive analysis of the action, and his investigation of figurative associations and character

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[8]Claes Schaar, Some Types of Narrative in Chaucer's Poetry (Lund Studies in English XXV. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1954).

[9]Claes Schaar, The Golden Mirror: Studies in Chaucer's Descriptive Technique and Its Literary Background (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1955).

[10]Charles Muscatine, "The Form of Speech in Chaucer: A Study in the Style and Function of Direct Discourse in Medieval Narrative Poetry" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, 1948).

composites does much to illumine one's consciousness of Chaucer's artistry. Again, however, Meech also depends heavily on a comparative method--a method which risks the defects of selective analogy. Through their comparative method, all of these works have been valuable in identifying the differences and similarities between the narrative method of Chaucer and his contemporaries. None, however, has addressed itself solely to the problem of how Chaucer reveals his thematic conception of the poem through the configuration of underlying techniques--techniques which unify the theme and render the controversial epilogue necessary and consistent. How Chaucer reveals theme around, between, and apart from dramatic scenes is intrinsic to his narrative and poetic techniques.

"Technique," says Mark Schorer, "is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and finally, of evaluating."[11] From this point of view everything that shows signs of the author's artistry can be called technique. But our concern with Chaucer's Troilus is with the substructure, so to speak--with

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[11]Mark Schorer, "Technique as Discovery," Hudson Review, I (Spring, 1948), 67.

those occasions when the author, in choosing to tell rather than show, implies his relationship to the poem.

Beneath the surface drama of Troilus's disappointment in love--a dramatic story strongly influenced by previous handlings and, Chaucer assumed, by historical fact--we find a structural development of narrative which supports the dramatic framework of the story. Those passages voiced by the narrator, passages of description, summary, and commentary, fulfill at least two functions. First, they supply the necessary narrative functions of the story: they locate action, identify lapses of time, describe characters and settings, explain motives, and sharpen focus. One might call these literal or denotative functions--signposts which explicitly direct the reader through the course of the story. Second, these passages provide the author with the means by which he may imply his own relationship to the story: they suggest relationships, offer symbols, allude to parallels, and link images. These connotative functions in Troilus and Criseyde serve to unify theme and to reveal the author's intentions in the story.

In these passages we find Chaucer linking elements of the story and unifying his thematic purpose. Progression of metaphors, similarity of allusions, methods of description, configuration of images complement or contradict (according to his itent) the surface action of the drama. Close

analysis of these narrative passages reveals not only a unity of theme but also a dimension of Chaucer's artistry which has been somewhat neglected. One must never forget that in addition to being poet and author, Chaucer was a performer. His medieval audience observed the wry customs collector intoning his works in live oral presentations. Although we are removed by six hundred years, glimpses of the playful performer still dance between lines and behind stanzas, not as an alienated and indifferent puppeteer, but as an intimately involved human being.

The identity of the narrator, therefore, has generated considerable speculation by numerous critics. Robert Jordan states that the first person "frame" of the narrator is conceived within the larger "frame" of the poet.[12] He suggests that the voice in the proems and at the end of the poem is the poet's, whereas the first person narrator within the poem itself represents a second and separate voice. The characteristics given the speaker of the opening lines, however, are maintained throughout the poem, so much that the voice which states that he is "A woful wight to han a drery feere," and that he "ne dar to love, for my unlikynesse" is the same voice that can later say "O blynde world, O blynde entencioun!" Although the attitude and pose of the narrator

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[12] Robert M. Jordan, "The Narrator in Chaucer's Troilus," English Literary History, XXI (January, 1954), 1-16.

may change, all passages of description, summary, and commentary reveal a single personality.

Charles Muscatine[13] and Charles Owen[14] both state, moreover, that the characteristics of the narrator of Troilus and Criseyde are similar to the characteristics of all Chaucer's personae (i.e., the personalities through whom he chooses to relate his tales), but they conclude that the narrator is not Chaucer. One might agree that the narrators of the Book of the Duchess, The Hous of Fame, and the Parliament of Fowles are somewhat naive, and, perhaps, that the narrators of Legend of Good Women and Canterbury Tales are apparently incompetent (e.g., in telling the Tale of Melibee) and annoying (by apologizing for Troilus and Criseyde). However, it is certainly most remarkable that this very consistency leads these critics to conclude that the narrator is not Chaucer, for such consistency is difficult to explain unless these characteristics are intrinsic to the personality of Chaucer himself.

In his thorough study of Chaucer's narrators, Henry Ludeke offers a plausible and sadly neglected

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[13] Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 136.

[14] Charles Owen, "Role of the Narrator in Parliament of Fowls," College English, XIV (1953), 269.

explanation for the narrators' personalities in Chaucer's works.[15] He shows that those characteristics and statements of the narrator which suggest a persona are the very statements and gestures Chaucer would use in oral presentations. The narrator, then, is not a character individualized by the poet for purposes of telling this particular story, such as Chaucer creates with the Canterbury pilgrims, but he is that extension of Chaucer's own personality which he would exhibit when presenting his poems before audiences. The narrator who speaks in Chaucer's name is Chaucer's dramatic version of his performing self. What Wayne Booth calls "the implied author"[16] is everywhere evident in Troilus and Criseyde. The voice of Chaucer, the conscious poet, echoes within the passages spoken by the performing narrator. This relationship does not render the role of the narrator less dramatic; indeed, the growing awareness of the narrator develops throughout the poem until what he learns and what the poet knows become, in the envoy, a single expression. The performer who narrates the poem enacts the discovery which is the enlightenment of the dramatized theme.

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[15]Henry Ludeke, "Die Funktionen Des Erzahlers in Chaucers Epischer Dichtung," Studien zur englischen Philologie, LXXII (1927) 1-155.

[16]Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

The controversial ending becomes contradictory only when compared to selected passages and episodes of the surface drama. Analysis of the underlying passages voiced by the narrator--the same voice which delivers the envoy--reveals a thematic unity out of which the concluding sentiments naturally grow. But which passages reveal the implied author? Where and how is he revealed?

The role of the narrator is most obviously evident in passages of commentary. Invocations, introductions, proems, and prayers voiced by the narrator are given in commentary. The narrator also comments on characters, points out parallels, acknowledges sources, and expounds on philosophy. Commentary serves the purpose of heightening the intensity with which the audience experiences particular actions in the poem. The appearance of the narrator also provides another level of experience as the audience watches the growing intimacy of the narrator's relationship to the poem. Commentary is always gratuitous, however, and thereby, indicative of authorial intent.

When Chaucer chooses to tell rather than show, when he compresses action and epitomizes episodes, his presence is implied. Certainly, such summaries must provide necessary transitions of time and place, dispense with relevant but unessential action, and establish pace and focus in the story. But the implications of relevance, the suggestive

use of allusions, and the connotative parallels repeat patterns controlled for thematic purposes. The narrator may choose what to summarize, but the poet's hand is evident in the manner by which it is done.

The author's presence is least obvious in description. Although description creates pictures, Chaucer implies through his methods and selection of subjects, relationships, and meanings explicitly revealing his theme. An underlying configuration of symbols and metaphors and a progressive pattern of methods and subjects reveal intentions which go beyond the narrative needs of the story.

The purpose of this study is to analyse those passages voiced by the narrator in order to discover the methods by which Chaucer controls, implies, and unifies his theme in Troilus and Criseyde. This study will attempt to show that the epilogue is consistent and grows necessarily out of the material of the poem. Finally, it is hoped that this analysis may shed further light on Chaucer's artistic method and contribute, thereby, to a fuller appreciation of England's greatest medieval poet.[17]

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[17]All quotations of Troilus and Criseyde are from Robert K. Root (ed.), The Book of Troilus and Criseyde by Geoffrey Chaucer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952). Quotations of other works by Chaucer are from F. N. Robinson (ed.), The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957).

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION

Troilus and Criseyde contains surprisingly little description (only two percent of the total number of lines); nevertheless, descriptions generate numerous dramatic parallels and thematic implications. For the most part, description concentrates on cosmography and characters. Chaucer omits detailed descriptions of interior settings--they are either ignored or impressionistically suggested by mention of single items--but, rather, he dwells on generalized impressions of seasons; detailed accounts of sunrises, sunsets, and astronomical conditions; and methodically controlled pictures of the major characters. To observe the overall effect and use Chaucer makes of descriptive passages--to see authorial implication in passages of description--it would be well to analyze cosmographic descriptions in the order in which they occur, separate from descriptions of characters and objects associated with them.

I. COSMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS

After the proem of Book I and following the long exposition of the Trojan War, the first description of the poem signals the beginning of a cosmic drama which parallels the action of the story:

> And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
> Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
> With newe grene of lusty Veer, the pryme,
> And swote smellen floures, white and rede,
> In sondry wises shewed . . . .
>
> I, 155-159

Chaucer's beginning the story in April initiates an artistic structure which adds unity to the aesthetic form of the poem. Although the entire course of the lovers' story covers a period of three years (Cf. V, 9), the major events take place in particular months which present the coming and passing of a single summer.[1] The events are so arranged that the principal action contained in each book occurs in sequential months and follows the sun's dramatic journey through appropriate stages of the zodiac. The first description of spring indicates that Troilus first sees Criseyde in April. Book II opens with a description of May, the month in which Troilus first meets with her. The lovers' tryst at Pandarus's house (Book III) occurs sometime in June under the sign of Cancer. The opening of Book IV states that the sun is in Leo, probably toward the end of July. The last description in Book V states that the sun is whirling out of Leo, an event which occurs on August twenty-third. Chaucer has arranged his poem so that the

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[1] Henry Sams in "Dual Time Scheme in Chaucer's Troilus," Modern Language Notes, LVI (1941), 94-100, presents a comparable observation.

history of the love affair parallels the coming and passing of a single summer while the sun moves from Aries (the Ram) to Virgo (the Virgin).

If one acknowledges this dramatic parallel of Troilus's experience, the sun's journey provides a cosmic dimension to the story and serves as a metaphor for the theme of the poem: "And sholden al oure herte on heven caste." Yet realization of this truth grows out of the experience of earthly love which man cannot control. The sun (and Troilus) first appears under the sign of the Ram as "newe" and "lusty" as the meadow. Mars, with whom Troilus is associated, rules this zodiacal house, and the first appearance of Troilus on this same day reveals a confident prince, sure of himself. As the sun nears the summer's heat, Troilus's passion for Criseyde intensifies under the sign of the Bull (the house of Venus) and both Troilus and Criseyde succumb to love while the sun moves through Gemini (the twins). They consummate their love under the most sexual of zodiacal signs (Cancer) while the sun enters the torrid summer and the heavens rain torrents about them. The sun climaxes its summer journey while in the zodiacal house it rules--Leo, the king of the heavens, who exemplifies cosmic splender. It is while the sun is in Leo that Troilus learns of Criseyde's (and earthly love's) unfaithfulness, and here he spurns secular love. Troilus

rises to the eighth sphere and realizes the enlightenment of divine love while the sun spins out of Leo into Virgo (the Virgin, associated with Mary) and after he directs his love from secular experience to divine purity, Troilus's drama ends. But the sun never stops. The reader leaves the poem knowing that the sun will repeat its journey forever and believing, perhaps, that the experience of secular love is but one season within an eternal and divine scheme.

This brief outline of the cosmic drama which parallels Troilus's story is enriched with greater detail throughout the cosmographic descriptions in the poem. In addition to unifying the central theme and supplying a cosmic parallel, Chaucer's manipulation of these descriptions accords a universality which transcends a particular lover (even pagan Troilus) to apply to all lovers and Christian man. This cosmic order also suggests the concomitant forces which surround man, control his life, and determine his fate: Astrology, Fortune, and Love.

A description of the continuing stages of the sun's journey opens Book II:

> In May, that moder is of monthes glade,
> That fresshe floures, blewe, white, and rede
> Ben quike agayn, that wynter dede made,
> And ful of bawme is fletyng every mede;
> Whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede
> Right in the white Bole, it so bitidde,
> As I shal synge, on Mayes day the thrydde.
>
> II, 50-56

Although Chaucer mentions "fresshe floures, blewe, white, and rede," this description of May is a generalized observation, the function of which is to establish the time rather than to present a vivid impression. Such springtime settings are in the convention of the Teseida and the Roman de la Rose, though Chaucer's description is more explicit in establishing an exact date.

There appears to be no conclusive evidence why Chaucer chooses "Mayes day the thrydde," yet he also uses it in The Knight's Tale and Nun's Priest's Tale. Professor Root notes that May third is one of the Egyptian "dismal" days which might account for Pandarus's "Teene in love."[2] Another possible explanation relates to the metaphor closing Book I and the role of Pandarus in Book II. The final stanza of the preceding Book depicts Troilus as a patient, waiting for the lore of the doctor to cure his sickness. The doctor, of course, is Pandarus and the cure, Criseyde. One of the most common practices of medical lore at Chaucer's time was leeching (using leeches to suck blood from a patient), and doctors were often called leechers. Criseyde, near the end of Book II (II, 1581) says of Troilus's

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[2]Robert Kilburn Root (ed.), The Book of Troilus and Criseyde by Geoffrey Chaucer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926), p. 437.

sickness, "best koude I yit ben his leche." Before going forth to seek the cure for Troilus on this day, Pandarus consults the position of the moon and decides its position is favorable for initiating his plan. But either Pandarus read his chart wrong or knew little of medical lore, for the leecher's manual, De Observatione Lunae et Quid, clearly states, "on maius monthe se thridda daeg is derigendlic."[3] Ironically, Pandarus initiates his "cure" on a day which portends the patient's death. Pandarus's attempts to control the situation attain only apparent success because forces beyond his control actually determine the outcome. Chaucer's irony might be obvious to his medieval audience, yet he provides evident clues in the exacting details of his descriptions.

In addition to specifying the date, Chaucer calls attention to the astronomical position of the stars, "Whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede/ Right in the white Bole, it so betidde . . . ." On May third the sun is in Taurus and has begun its decline past the middle of the sign. Taurus is the zodiacal house of Venus, and its significant humour is melancholy, a state in which both Troilus and Pandarus find themselves on this day. This

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[3]Thomas Oswald Cockayne (ed.), Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft (London: Holland Press, 1961), III, 152.

astrological position symbolically parallels the situation of Troilus, who experiences emotional and spiritual frustration under the influence of Venus. Furthermore, white is the symbolical color of Taurus, a color mentioned in the description of the flowers (possibly jonquils, the symbolical flower of Taurus) and in the line mentioning Taurus, "white Bole."[4] The sexual implications of the bull and "bemes sprede" underscore the earthliness of the love Troilus experiences. These astronomical positions of the heavens symbolize the worldly situation of the two lovers. In doing so, Chaucer not only suggests the unchallengeable machinations of the fateful stars, but also implies the universal consequences of the lovers' destinies.

One might notice, in this description of May flowers, a slight variation from the description of April flowers. Both passages mention white (purity) and red (passion), but now that Troilus suffers in love, blue (devotion) is mentioned, adding a religious dimension to Troilus's experience in earthly love. Devotion was noticeably lacking in Troilus's behavior at the temple until he spied Criseyde.

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[4] F. N. Robinson in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 818, traces the line to Ovid's description of the white bull in the form of which Jupiter rapes Europa, but, he states, no reason for the association seems evident.

Now, under the power of love, he experiences and expresses devotion even though it may, in Christian terms, be misdirected.

Chaucer indicates in the subsequent astrological description, however, that one is not entirely responsible for his desting while influenced by love, for the celestial drama of the planetary movements also influence terrestrial affairs:

> And also blisful Venus, wel arrayed,
> Sat in hire seventhe hous of hevene tho.
> Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,
> To helpen sely Troilus of his woo.
> II, 680-683

The position of planets in the seventh house, found just above the western horizon, was used in horary astrology to give judgment on all questions of love. Venus, being the most beneficent planet in love matters, would exert the most favorable influence while in the seventh house. In making this observation, then, Chaucer implies that the influence of the stars exerts a force over the will of Criseyde which inclines her toward love. She cannot, therefore, be held solely responsible for responding to Troilus's suit. True in the case of Troilus, it is also true in the case of Diomede. At the climactic moment of Book V when Criseyde decides to be comforted by Diomede (V, 1016-1020), Chaucer describes the sunset, showing Venus just above the western horizon, which would place her in the seventh house:

> The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte
> The wey, ther brode Phebus down alighte. . . .
> V, 1016-1017

Since the same influences control both situations, Criseyde should not be held wholly to blame for either her love of Troilus or for her "slydyng of courage" and subsequent love of Diomede. In suggesting the parallel of the two events, Chaucer not only justifies the character of Criseyde, but reiterates his theme: earthly love is mutable and one is helpless under its influence.

The same observation can be made of a later passage which announces the rain storm:

> The bente moone with hire hornes pale,
> Saturne, and Jove in Cancro joyned were,
> That swych a reyn from hevene gan avale,
> That every maner womman that was there
> Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray feere.
> III, 624-628

Criseyde is forced to spend the night because Saturn and Jove conjoin in Cancer with the moon and bring about the rainstorm. This particular phenomenon is so rare that it had not taken place for more than six hundred years prior to its occurrence on May 13, 1385.[5] Astrologically, the phenomenon implies significant conditions which are

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[5]Some scholars have used this phenomenon in an attempt to date the composition of the poem.

indicative of the relationship between Troilus and Criseyde, and suggests the possible fate of their affair.

The sign of Cancer is sexual in origin, representing the joining of male and female spermatozoa. Nevertheless, Cancer traditionally exerts a malign influence and portends violent death. A medieval audience, knowing the astrological implications of the lovers' consummation under this sign, would undoubtedly be aware of the imminent catastrophe.

The particular conjoining of Jupiter and Saturn in Cancer adds further implications that, coincidentally, supply factual and symbolic dimensions to the poem. Jupiter is known to be the "exaltation" of Cancer, and Saturn its "detriment," whereas the moon is its "ruler." Although the moon, frequently associated with love and lovers, is in its zodiacal house, the combination of Saturn and Jupiter conjoined with the moon indicates that this union of the lovers will bring exaltation and detriment, fulfillment and disappointment. Finally, the planet Mars is in an extremely detrimental position in Cancer. Since Troilus has already been associated with Mars in the preceding book, it appears more than fortuitous that the union of Troilus and Criseyde occurs under a malign sign which portends violent death, yet embraces both the rewards and penalties of earthly love, and signifies its detriment with a symbolic representation of Troilus. This unique astrological

detail gives credibility to the immediately preceding passage of commentary in which Chaucer asserts that "The godes wil" prevents Criseyde from leaving Pandarus's house and, thereby, brings about the climactic tryst.

The remaining descriptions of the storm are scattered over the next hundred lines rather than collected in a single descriptive passage:

> And alweye in this meene while it ron,
> And blew therwith so wonderliche loude,
> That wel neigh no man heren other koude.
> III, 677-679

> The sterne wynd so loude gan to route,
> That no wight oother noise myghte heere.
> III, 743-744

Chaucer maintains the constant presence of the storm in the background while the principal action continues. He does not wish the reader to forget the howling and raging storm and its mounting intensity. Such a technique has the additional effect of heightening the emotional intensity of the poem as the meeting of the lovers nears.

One also notices that these descriptions appeal to the auditory sensibility--nothing can be heard over the howling storm. Certainly, the noise is advantageous to Troilus and Pandarus, for they can execute the tryst without arousing the other guests. Beyond this strategic advantage for Troilus, however, the presence of the storm offers an aesthetic advantage for Chaucer. The raging chaos outside

the house before the meeting is juxtaposed with the quiet calm within Criseyde's room during the meeting. The external storm correlates with the tempestuous passion of Troilus: both have made the meeting possible and both spend themselves during the climactic meeting. Once the two lovers meet, the storm is not mentioned, and one may well imagine the slow waning of the storm symbolizing the waning frustration and turmoil within both lovers until both storms subside: one in the consummation of their love, the other in the tranquil yet triumphal rise of Phoebus at dawn.

The description of the dawn itself furthers the celestial drama and complements the earthly one:

> Whan the cok, comune astrologer,
> Gan on his brest to bete, and after crowe,
> And Lucifer, the dayes messager,
> Gan for to rise, and oute hire stremes throwe,
> And estward roos, to hym that coude it knowe,
> Fortuna Major . . . .
>
> III, 1415-1420

The storm's fury has been replaced by the sound of the rooster and the beams of the rising stars, but the sun itself has not yet risen. Chaucer specifically mentions that Venus and Fortuna Major rise.[6] Although the

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[6]Chaucer's use of the feminine pronoun in line 1418 indicates that Lucifer refers to Venus. Cf. Root, Troilus and Criseyde, p. 488.

significance of these astrological phenomena remains obscure, the use of them in this passage helps to unify the entire section dealing with the tryst since it echoes Chaucer's earlier mention of the stars. At the beginning of this section, the narrator addresses Fortune as the executrix of fates (III, 617); now, after the lovers have succumbed to love, Fortuna Major rises in the east. Chaucer carefully points out early in this section that Saturn and Jupiter are in Cancer. Now, at the end of the lovers' night together, he identifies the astrological conditions with his reference to Venus by ambiguously calling the goddess of love by the name of a Christian demon. Certainly, Venus represents secular love, she distracts one from directing devotion to the Christian deity, and in matters of love serves the lover in the same way Lucifer serves the sinner: she provides the temptation and experience without which divine love and grace would be unattainable. If, on the other hand, this morning star refers to Christian iconology,[7] its relationship to the sun also serves Chaucer's theme, for it heralds the celestial light of bright Phoebus which secular lovers, distracted by the ephemoral passions of earthly love, ironically denounce.

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[7]Cf. Revelations 22:16, "I Jesus . . . am . . . the bright and morning star."

These cosmographic descriptions of the moving planets against the background of immutable heavens open and close the lovers' climactic night, and thereby give unity to the section, significance to their actions, and metaphoric expression to the theme.

The last cosmographical description in the poem serves, as in other instances, a symbolic purpose at an opportune moment. Just after Diomede leaves Criseyde's tent, having pressed his suit for the last time, Chaucer interrupts the narrative with a description of the evening:

> The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte
> The way, ther brode Phebus down alighte;
> And Cynthea hire charhors overraughte
> To whirle out of the Leoun, if she myghte;
> And Signifer his candeles sheweth brighte.
> V, 1016-1020

Criseyde's promised ten days approach their end with the dying evening; the sun has left Venus alone in the sky and the moon has not yet risen. With such preparation, it should be no surprise that in the following stanzas Criseyde chooses to be comforted by Diomede rather than remain true to Troilus, for the descriptive characteristics of change and finality prepare for this catastrophic moment.

Finality is shown as the sun falls behind the horizon, marking the end of day; the ten days Criseyde had promised to wait come to an end, and the year has passed its mid-point, falling into the last days of summer. These astronomical

facts symbolize the decline and end of the lovers' affair--a drama that has run its course under the influence of both the goddess and the planet Venus. Chaucer has balanced the course of their affair by using this description of dusk as an inverse parallel of the earlier description of dawn which followed their consummation. Then, at dawn, Venus, "the dayes messager," led the sun in its ascent to the heavens; but now, at dusk, Venus follows the sun, pointing the way of its descent. Like the wheel of the Godes Fortuna, the goddess of love appears, perhaps, even whimsical in the way she directs lovers--and the sun--to the heights of the earthly paradise that love offers, and can also point the way to its decline and downfall.

Change is also explicit in this description of dusk. Day, of course, changes into night, but more importantly, the stars are moving from Leo to Virgo. Chaucer observes a certain symmetry in consummating the affair in Cancer which with Leo and Virgo, comprise the three periods of the summer season. But if Criseyde is associated with the mutable stars, Troilus has been connected with the immutable constellation of Leo (Cf. V, 831). As Cynthia strives to whirl out of Leo, Criseyde abandons Troilus. Moreover, if Criseyde and the affairs of earthly love are associated with the moving and mutable heavenly bodies, Troilus becomes identified with the fixed stars. Here he settles in the final moments of the poem

where at last he finds the constancy that was so lacking on earth. Here, the idealized lover finally finds his abode in the idealized heaven of the eighth sphere, where he perceives:

> The erratik sterres, herkenyng armonye
> With sownes ful of hevenyssh melodie.
> V, 1812-1813

Having experienced and transcended the joys and sorrows of love, Troilus finally discovers harmony. In view of the cosmic drama displayed in the poem and its concomitant mythological allusions, this discovery is in keeping with the theme of the poem. Troilus has been associated with Mars and Criseyde with Venus, and the result of that mythological union produced a daughter--Harmonia. Chaucer manipulates astrological details to parallel the story of Troilus and Criseyde, and, in turn, utilizes the mythological allusions which planetary names denote to imply his theme and to give it unity.

This technique is especially striking (and surprisingly appropriate to this poem) if one recalls Chaucer's "Complaint of Mars." In that poem Chaucer describes the progress and failure of Mar's love for Venus by tracing the planets' conjunction in the zodiac: the character of Mars changes as he nears Venus, they conjoin under a sign that is detrimental to Mars, and she leaves him because it is her

nature to travel faster than he. The poem shows Chaucer's metaphoric perception of the cosmos as a dramatic parallel for a love story. The association of Troilus and Criseyde with Mars and Venus and Chaucer's parallel use of the cosmic drama suggest a common method. The two plots maintain general parallels, the themes are similar, and particular details are repeated. The discovery about love expressed in Mars's lament, for example, could well be voiced by Troilus:

> And thogh he made a lover love a thing,
> And maketh hit seme stedfast and during,
> Yet putteth he in hyt such mysaventure
> That reste nys ther non in his yeving.
> And that is wonder, that so juste a kyng
> Doth such hardnesse to his creature.
> Thus, whether love breke or elles dure,
> Algates he that hath with love to done
> Hath ofter wo then changed ys the mone.
> III, 227-235

Just as the cosmic drama is controlled by universal and immutable forces, so is man's plight in love. The experience of earthly love is natural and uncontrollable, and that experience includes both joy and pain. The knowledge gleaned from that experience informs of the superiority and dependability of divine love. This is what Mars suggests; this is what Troilus learns; this is what Chaucer announces implicitly throughout the poem and explicitly in the epilogue.

II. DESCRIPTIONS OF CHARACTERS

Character descriptions differ from cosmographic descriptions only in that the methods Chaucer uses become more significant when he describes people: realistic, idealistic, and impressionistic presentation of the characters indicate the characters' relationship to love and the poet's revelation of theme. Troilus and Criseyde are described in piecemeal fashion until Chaucer presents their final portraits in Book V. Pandarus is never described, and, without the substantiation of a concrete portrait, he remains an apparently influential but abstract force who arranges intrigues and trysts but who ironically cannot change the fateful outcome. Most of these descriptive passages focus on Troilus and Criseyde and function to reveal the lovers' emerging portraits.

The first description of Criseyde occurs during the narrator's summary of the Trojan War:

> Criseyde was this lady name al right;
> As to my doom, in al Troies cite
> Nas non so fair; for, passynge every wight,
> So aungelik was hir natif beaute,
> That lik a thing inmortal semed she,
> As is an hevenyssh perfit creature,
> That down were sent in scornynge of nature.
> I, 99-105

Although the stanza creates a general idealization of the heroine, it offers no concrete details whatsoever. This first description of Criseyde in the poem depicts her in

an ideal and hyperbolic manner that is never repeated. Such words as "aungelik" and "hevenyssh" suggest a woman so elevated that she is, perhaps, not of this world. Because "aungelic" and "hevenyssh" further restrict her other-worldliness to a Christian context, such adjectives are inappropriate to the Trojan setting of the poem. Our first impression of Criseyde suggests a figure embodying some latent Christian ideal. But as the poem progresses and as concrete and realistic details are added, we observe her descent from heavenly perfection to earthly reality.

Chaucer seems to hint at this conception of Criseyde by his revision of line 104. In the A manuscript, which is unquestionably an early one, Chaucer wrote, "As doth a perfit heuenly creature."[8] Perhaps because Criseyde later proves to be not so "heuenly," Chaucer changes the modification to "perfit creature," thereby adjusting the line to fit her appearance rather than her character. His use of "semed" also suggests a difference between the appearance of the heavenly angel and the reality of the earthly woman. Chaucer further stresses her divine appearance by suggesting her beauty might "scorne" nature. Although this may refer only

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[8] Robert Root, The Textual Tradition of Chaucer's Troilus (Chaucer Society, Series I, Number 99, 1916), p. 41.

to her physical appearance, it also is a foreshadowing of her character. This use of description to imply character typifies most descriptions of personages throughout the poem.

The second description of Criseyde begins to show her transformation from angel to woman:

> Among thise others folk was Criseyda,
> In widewes habit blak, but nathles,
> Right as oure firste lettre is now an A,
> In beaute first so stood she makeles;
> Hire goodly lokyng gladede al the prees.
> Nas nevere yit seyn thyng to ben preysed derre,
> Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre,
>
> As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichone,
> That hir behelden in hir blake wede;
> And yit she stood ful lowe and stille allone,
> Byhynden other folk in litel brede,
> And neigh the dore, ay under shames drede,
> Simple of atire, and debonaire of chere,
> With ful assured lokyng and manere.
>
> I, 169-182

Again the description presents a general idealization, but a few concrete details of her dress do emerge. Slowly and deliberately Chaucer adds selective details to the portrait of Criseyde so that her appearance in the temple presents her as one, perhaps, not of the earth. Yet, as she becomes more concretely realized and less idealized, she becomes most certainly of this earth. Rather than dwelling on concrete detail, then, this passage presents general characteristics of Criseyde--stature, apparent shyness, and physical appearance.

The curious simile in line 172 has incurred much conjecture among critics. Certainly Chaucer intended to associate Criseyde with the letter "A," for he both states so in the simile and implies it in an unusual spelling of her name. John Livingston Lowes suggests that the letter refers to the initial of Queen Anne's name, the "first lady" of the nation, and he has used this conjecture to date the composition of the poem.[9] Chaucer devotes such care to the details of his description, however, that this unique simile may imply symbolic relationships which go beyond a possible bouquet to his queen. Indeed, that Chaucer should associate his queen with a character who is now in mourning weeds and who later shows "slydyng of courage" and unfaithfulness of devotion is a questionable proposition, especially during the reign of Richard II.

Chaucer carefully has laid the foundation and background for his poem and is, at this point, beginning his story. Just as "A" begins the alphabet, it also begins April, a month which appropriately begins poems (not least among them, The Canterbury Tales). April, truly, opens

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[9] John Livingston Lowes, "Date of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," Publication of the Modern Language Association, XXIII (1908), 285-306.

spring--the first season of the year. Furthermore, in April the sun enters its first zodiacal zone as it begins its year's journey; and that sign also begins with "A"--Aries. Although Chaucer's use of "now" in the line under discussion could allude to his present queen, it quite possibly indicates merely that time period which opens the poem, April or Aries.[10]

The religious significance of "A" (Alpha) could hardly be lost on Chaucer's Catholic audience. Common in Romanesque art and universal in Catholic churches, "A" alludes to the Christian God ("I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," Revelations, 1:8). "Oure first letter is now an A" suggests that Chaucer and his audience are Christians and all the benefits of Christianity are now available to them as they were not available to Troilus and Criseyde. Associating Criseyde with this idea heightens the potentiality of attaining divine love (the beginning and the ending) through the experience of secular love. But Criseyde is not a Christian, and her transformation from potential angel to patent woman is controlled by Chaucer's method of description which accentuates and unifies this thematic

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[10]Also in Alchemy, which Chaucer apparently knew well, "A" expresses the beginning of all things.

principle.

The oblique allusion to the zodiac (April, Aries) contained in the description is strengthened by the metaphor with which Chaucer describes Criseyde at the end of the stanza. He calls her a star.[11] Later in the poem the star with which she is associated is, of course, Venus, under whose influence all lovers come. Criseyde, who has been described in idealistic terms, now stands in the temple and is associated with the goddess of love. For those of Chaucer's audience who were familiar with the signs of the stars, the irony would be readily apparent, since Mars is the ruler while the sun is in Aries, and Venus is the detriment. That the warrior-knight of Troy is moved when he looks on the "goddess" Criseyde is, therefore, an ill sign in the language of astrology.

The final description of Book I again presents Criseyde and adds (as one now expects) still further concrete details of her physical appearance and more information about her ganeral character:

> She nas nat with the leste of hire stature;
> But alle hire lymes so wel answerynge
> Weren to wommanhode, that creature

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[11]One might note that Alpha is also a term used in astronomy to denote the brightest star in a constellation.

> Nas nevere lasse mannyssh in semynge;
> And ek the pure wise of hire mevynge
> Shewed wel that men myght in hire gesse
> Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.
> I, 281-287

Chaucer has now progressed from an initial emphasis on her "hevenyssh, inmortal," and "aungelik" nature to explicit recognition of her "wommanly" reality.

With this passage one may also observe an emerging pattern which is typical of Chaucer's narrative technique. Each time that his summary narrative has brought him to focus on Criseyde, he has stopped the forward movement of the story to describe her. Chaucer's abrupt shifting of the narrative technique from summary to description enhances the arresting effect of her beauty, for this is the third time in the poem that Chaucer has brought the narrative to a standstill when Criseyde appears. Since he has done so before this passage, the reader accepts as credible Troilus's behavior when he sees Criseyde, for the narrator himself has already twice been "astoned" by her beauty.

Chaucer's preparation for this description also increases the effect of Criseyde's beauty and the probability of Troilus's startling reaction to it. In the preceding stanzas Troilus goes "forth" and looks at everyone "aboute," on this lady and that, trying to see if she "were of town or of withoute." Troilus looks all around, sweeping his eyes over the crowd; the scanning stops as "His eye

perced, and so depe it wente." The rest of the crowd dissolves while the image of Criseyde fills his entire vision. Finally, Troilus's eye rests on Criseyde, "and ther it stente." Troilus's searching eye, the window of his soul, settles on Criseyde and finds in her angelic appearance what he had been looking for. His discovery of love in this religious setting conjoins the two thematic elements--earthly love and divine love--and Troilus experiences both as he looks upon the woman-goddess, Criseyde. While in the temple to perform a religious and civic duty (to pay homage to the protectress of the city), Troilus is physically attracted to Criseyde and distracted from his spiritual and moral obligations; Troilus's eye cannot move, for love has usurped his entire being.

Though descriptions of Troilus do not appear until Book II, when Criseyde sees him ride by her window, they are thoroughly prepared for. Pandarus has just departed, leaving Criseyde to ponder what he has said of Troilus's love for her, when she hears cries from the street announcing the approach of the triumphant hero returning from battle. Chaucer further strengthens this careful preparation with two lines by the narrator which allude to Boethius's discussion of the nature of necessity. The appearance of Troilus is necessary at this moment in the story both for its psychological effect on Criseyde and for its aesthetic effect on the narrative. The

past four hundred and fifty lines have been devoted to conversation between Pandarus and Criseyde, and the next three hundred lines deal, in the main, with her reactions to that conversation. Here, again, description arrests narrative movement at moments when an image better serves to reveal Chaucer's intention:

> This Troilus sat on his baye steede,
> Al armed, save his hede, ful richely;
> And wownded was his hors, and gan to blede,
> On which he rood a pas ful softely;
> But swich a knyghtly sighte, trewely,
> As was on hym, was nat, withouten faille,
> To loke on Mars, that god is of batailles;
>
> So lik a man of armes, and a knyght,
> He was to seen, fulfild of heigh prowesse;
> For bothe he hadde a body and myght
> To don that thing, as wel as harynesse;
> And ek to seen hym in his gere hym dresse,
> So fressh, so yong, so worthy semed he,
> It was an heven upon hym for to see.
> II, 624-637

Because of its elaborate preparation, this description is somewhat disappointing. Almost no concrete description is given of the physical person of Troilus. He is presented in rich armor, sitting on a horse; the narrator tells, in general terms, of his virtues and qualities, "So fressh, so yong, so worthy semed he,/It was an heven upon hym for to see." After the people praise him, he blushes and lowers his eyes. One is left with a generalized impression, uncertain whether Troilus is tall, short, dark, blond, bearded, ruddy, or gap-toothed. In contrast, his helmet and

horse are described in explicit detail that suggests the violence of the battle and the valor of the hero:

> His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,
> That by a tyssew heng, his bak byhynde;
> His sheld to-dasshed was with swerdes and maces,
> In which men myghte many an arwe fynde,
> That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rynde.
> II, 638-642

These details, in addition to the vivid presence of the crowd, emphasize the vague figure of Troilus, who remains an abstraction. Although we have observed his behavior, know his motives, and emphathize with his predicament, we do not see him. The accoutrements which surround and the language which describes him evoke an impression but not a vivid picture.[12] If, as has been suggested, Troilus represents the idealistic view of experience, Chaucer emphasizes such representation by presenting his hero without the concrete details which would provide him with corporeal reality. By keeping Troilus physically abstract, Chaucer makes his emotional and spiritual experiences the primary concern of the poem--Troilus and his conception of love remain unrealistic.

Just as Criseyde is associated with Venus, Troilus is associated with Mars. Before Pandarus leaves Criseyde, he

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[12] Muscatine, Chaucer and The French Tradition, p. 138.

says:

> What so I spak, I mente nat but wel,
> By Mars, the god that helmed is of steel.
> II, 592-593

When Troilus passes by Criseyde's window soon afterwards, he is associated with the god of war:

> But swich a knyghtly sighte, trewly,
> As was on hym, was nat, withouten faille,
> To loke on Mars, that god is of bataille.
> II, 628-630

The effect of this association is further strengthened by Chaucer's detailed description of Troilus's helmet. Since Chaucer stresses astrological observations, however, his mention of Mars here alludes to the planet as well as the god ("It was an heven upon hym for to see."). This association parallels the cosmic situation, for Mars maintains an important position while the sun is in Taurus, an unfavorable sign and detriment to the house of Venus (representative, perhaps, of Criseyde's house, which Troilus now passes as he comes from battle).

The longest and most significant description in Book III comes, as one might suspect, at the climactic moment of consummation. The earlier sections concerned with the meeting of Troilus and Criseyde are relatively bare of description, which thereby strengthens the visual effect of seeing the lovers when they are described in some detail. Chaucer begins the passage by mentioning those

qualities which contrast to the external storm:

> Criseyde, al quyt from every drede and tene,
> As she that juste cause hadde hym to triste,
> Made hym swich feste, it joye was to sene.
> III, 1226-1228

Since she is free from fear and dread, both of the storm and of love, she submits to the nature of things--she offers him a sensual feast--even though the situation may violate social conventions and religious codes. A vivid image drawn from nature immediately follows:

> And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
> By trent and writhe the swote wodebynde,
> Gan eche of hem in armes other wynde.
> III, 1230-1231

Chaucer, here, emphasizes the universal and natural forces which bring the lovers together. During this consummation scene he mentions fire, air, water, and earth; his imagery draws on minerals, plants, animals and birds; he appeals to all five senses while describing the lovers. The universality of their experience is unquestionable, but even this does not necessarily imply that their sexual union epitomizes the heights which love can attain. The joys they experience remain the acme only of earthly love. But the possibility of attaining divine love and eternal joy remains potential within them, for, after all, she is "hevenyssh, inmortal, aungelik" and he is "an heven." Man can, perhaps, transcend the earthly state to achieve a divine love implied in all creation.

The two stanzas which follow this image counterpoise two similes, one to describe each lover:

> And as the newe abaysed nyghtyngale,
> That stynteth first when she bygynneth to singe,
> Whan that she heareth any herde tale,
> Or in the hegges any wyght sterynge,
> And after, siker, doth hire vois out ringe;
> Right so Criseyde, whan hire drede stente,
> Opned hire herte, and tolde al hire entente.
>
> And right as he that seth his deth yshapen,
> And deyen moste in ought that he may gesse
> And sodeynly rescous doth hym escapen,
> And from his deth is brought in sykernesse;
> For al this world, in swych present gladnesse,
> Is Troilus, and hath his lady swete.
>
> III, 1233-1245

Criseyde's attitude is compared to a nightingale whose singing had been interrupted by fear but who now feels secure. She finds security in earthly love while the heavens rage outside her window. Troilus's situation is compared to that of a man who has been saved from imminent death. He finds salvation and a cure for his sickness in love. Chaucer celebrates the benefits of earthly love so that by his later contrast he may indicate the superiority of divine love. But the irony of the situation is evident. Although the storm makes the union possible, the heavens rage, seemingly in protest, during the consummation. Though the stars have been instrumental in bringing the lovers together, the astrological conditions portend disaster for the union. Criseyde finds comfort in a love which will be disastrous, and she is associated with a bird symbolic of

one who has been abused by sexual love. Troilus is saved metaphorically from death by his "leecher," yet it is later in death that he finds the enlightenment and solace of divine love. Chaucer suggests these ironies through his carefully chosen metaphors. They echo his thematic intent while fulfilling his narrative needs.

Finally, Chaucer describes Criseyde with erotic sensuality and poignant simplicity:

> Hire armes smale, hire steyghte bak and softe,
> Hire sydes longe, flesshly, smothe, and white
> He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte
> Hire snowissh throte, hire brestes rounde and lite.
> III, 1247-1250

Nowhere else in the entire poem does Chaucer use such vivid and concrete details in describing a person. When Criseyde appears most earthy, Chaucer pictures her most concretely. But this detailed realism presents an ironic contrast to Chaucer's description of Troilus. He has remained idealized; the descriptions of him have been impressionistic and, at times, vague. At this moment of attaining the ideal courtly love, Troilus remains an impressionistic figure. The two polarities of love, which may be a single conception, are presented in this moment of consummation by the descriptive realism of Criseyde and by the impressionistic idealization of Troilus.

Later this same night the lovers exchange rings and Criseyde gives Troilus a" . . . broche, gold and asure,/

In which a ruby set was like an herte." (III, 1370-1371). The exchange of rings is conventional in medieval literature, and does not necessarily imply espousal, but Chaucer's invention of the brooch, and his explication of it in greater detail than that of the rings suggest its significance. The brooch contains the three primary colors (yellow, blue, and red) which correspond, astrologically, to the sun, Jupiter, and Mars. Although the brooch is given as a gift of love, it ironically (except for the heart) signifies nothing related to love. The color, gem, and metal associated with Venus are absent, whereas other significations are evident: gold, in its association with the sun, signifies intellect and is an attribute of spiritual truth and knowledge; lapis lazuli, the azure blue gem related to Jupiter, represents the heavens and religious significance; the ruby, an attribute of Mars and related to Leo (both associated with Troilus) signifies blood, fire, and passion. The passionate heart, then, set in a background of religious truth and surrounded by spiritual significance, corresponds to Chaucer's essential theme.

Chaucer's inventive addition and his detailed description of the brooch suggest that it may contain allusive qualities beyond its traditional symbolic implications. Troilus and Criseyde have been associated with Mars and Venus,

and it has been suggested that Chaucer recalled "The Complaint of Mars" while writing Troilus and Criseyde.[13] In both the mythological tale and Chaucer's earlier poem, the Brooch of Thebes has a significant position. In the original myth Venus gives the brooch to Harmonia (the daughter of Mars and Venus) for a wedding gift, but it evidently had the fatal property of creating disorder and bloodshed for its owner; everyone who owns it encounters strife and violent death. In "The Complaint of Mars" Chaucer describes the brooch and its qualities:

> The broche of Thebes was of such a kynde,
> So ful of rubies and of stones of Ynde,
> That every wight, that sette on hit an ye
> He wende anon to worthe out of his mynde;
> So sore the beaute wolde his herte bynde,
> Til he hit had, him thoghte he moste dye;
> . . . . . .
> And whan hit was fro his possessioun,
> Then had he double wo an passioun
> For he so feir a tresor had forgo;
> But yet this broche, as in conclusioun,
> That every wight that had hit shulde have wo;
> And therfore in the worcher was the vice,
> And in the covetour that was so nyce.
> IV, 245-262

The similarities between the principal characters and the comparable descriptions between the brooches of the two poems endow Criseyde's gift with ominous overtones which portend the woeful conclusion of her affair with Troilus. The effects of the Brooch of Thebes parallel the effects of

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[13] Cf. ante, pp. 24-25.

earthly love on Troilus; his heart is besieged by the beauty of Criseyde, he thinks he will go mad unless he possesses her, and his sorrow doubles when he loses her. Moreover, the lesson which Mars' uses the brooch to symbolize correlates with an aspect of Chaucer's theme in Troilus. Mars states that the unfortunate influence of the brooch comes not from the brooch itself or the giver or the possessor who remains ignorantly naive, but from the maker. He applies this significance to his beloved:

> For thogh my lady have so gret beauto
> That I was mad til I had gote her grace,
> She was not cause of myn adversite,
> But he that wroghte her, also mot I the,
> That putte such a beaute in her face,
> That made me coveyten and purchace
> Myn oune deth; him wite I that I dye,
> And myn unwit, that ever I camb so hye.
> III, 264-271

Likewise, Criseyde is not to blame for Troilus's seduction into earthly love; Eros, Venus, Fortune, Nature, the stars, and pagan gods all play a part in the deception. Although Troilus blames Criseyde for her eventual perfidy, Chaucer (especially in passages of commentary) constantly attempts to excuse her by emphasizing the uncontrollable forces influencing her. Troilus learns, however, and Chaucer states in the epilogue that divine love is superior to secular love because it transcends the influences of these mutable forces. The narrator's simple description of a brooch generates through the authorial voice symbolic implication and allusive

significance which echo and emphasize the thematic unity of the poem.

When Troilus later learns of Criseyde's exchange with Antenor, Chaucer weaves descriptions into the narrative which show only glimpses of Troilus and flashes of his appearance:

> Ful lik a ded ymage, pale and wan;
> IV, 235

> His hed to the wal, his body to the ground.
> IV, 244

But even here, these glimpses depict postures and generalizations of appearance which again fail to portray Troilus as a vivid, concrete individual. He is described as a dead man, a metaphor which echoes the image of his salvation on the night of consummation. If Criseyde has saved him from death with her love, her departure will inevitably bring him again to the threshold of death. But this metaphor denotes only terrestrial relationships--Troilus finds celestial life after death. Chaucer's irony is paradoxical only on one level, for his theme encompasses the totality of experience, terrestrial and celestial. Worldly love supplies the highest joys of earthly experience, but because it is mutable, transitory, and ephemoral, it also brings painful despair and eventual disappointment. Divine love may be unrealized until after death, but it is everlasting and dependable. Chaucer denies Troilus corporeality and uses this metaphor

of the dead man to emphasize this thematic idea.

Although Troilus lives his story and plays his role throughout the poem, one wonders whether he is identifiable as a character or, rather, as a personification of the courtly love experience. Indeed, at times he seems almost a burlesque of the courtly lover; at other times he appears to be a composite figure characterizing the behaviors of a variety of courtly types. Whatever one may suspect, however, one can be assured that Chaucer has to the fullest extent deliberately denied Troilus the concrete and sensory details which could render him a more realistic character in the story.

In contrast, Criseyde becomes more and more realistic as more and more details about her appearance are revealed. When Pandarus comes to Criseyde after she has learned of the exchange, he finds her weeping:

> . . . for with hire salte teris
> Hire brest, hire face, ybathed was ful wete.
> The myghty tresses of hire sonnyssh heeris,
> Unbroiden, hangen al aboute hire eeris;
> . . . . . .
>
> Hire face, lik of Paradys the ymage,
> Was al ychaunged in another kynde,
> The pleye, the laughter, men was wont to fynde
> In hire, and ek hire joies everichone,
> Be fled; and thus lieth Criseyde allone.
>
> About hire eyen two a purple ryng
> Bytrent, in sothfast tokenyng of hire peyne.
> IV, 813-870

In addition to revealing Criseyde's sorrow, Chaucer gives specific details of her appearance. When he begins to idealize her, as in the second stanza, he immediately evokes another image of concrete detail. Even in her grief her "myghty tresses" and her "sonnyssh heeris" denote a vitality and vivaciousness of character. Her salt tears imbue her face and breasts and suggest life, not death.

Whereas in his descriptions of Troilus Chaucer presents impressionistic generalizations from which one may glean only the vague appearance of the man, in his descriptions of Criseyde he presents concrete and realistic details that suggest general characteristics. By a selective use of these two methods of description Chaucer implies the major differences between the heroine and the hero: one is an active participant in the reality of earthly love, somewhat determining her relationship to that love and to her lover; the other is seemingly a passive victim of idealized love, destined to the disappointment such commitment implies.

The three famous portraits, which compose the most important descriptions in Book V, have been the object of much speculation and research.[14] Because most of the scholars investigating these passages deal with the sources

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[14]Root, Troilus and Criseyde, pp. 542 ff.

(generally agreeing on Joseph of Exeter),[15] few critics have discussed the passage from the point of view of their intrinsic narrative effect. The presentation is perfectly balanced, giving one stanza to each rival counterpoised on either side of the three stanzas which present Criseyde. Concrete details of Diomede's and Criseyde's physical characteristics contrast with those of an impressionistic Troilus.

Chaucer adds significance to Diomede's position in the poem by presenting him first:

> This Diomede, as bokes us declare,
> Was in his nedes prest and corageous,
> With sterne voys, and myghty lymes square,
> Hardy, testif, strong, and chivalrous
> Of dedes, lik his fader Tideus;
> And some men seyn, he was of tonge large;
> And heir he was of Calidoyne and Arge.
> V, 799-805

Beginning with such general qualities as his courage, the description then presents the concrete details of Diomede's stern voice and powerful limbs; after telling of other general qualities, and something of his lineage, Chaucer then makes an ambiguous statement concerning Diomede's speech. The phrase "he was of tonge large" could mean that Diomede spoke a great deal, implying that he spoke well, or that

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[15] Robert K. Root, "Chaucer's Dares," Modern Philology, XV (1918), 1-22.

he spoke too freely, suggesting his words were untrustworthy. Thus, the description delineates character, serves as a transitional device between the preceding monologue and the present passage, and shows contrasting qualities between the two suitors.

The placement of the portraits themselves also provides a transition of sorts between Diomede's resolution to woo Criseyde and the execution of his plan. Most writers who deal with the Troy legend, including Dares, Benoit, and Guido delle Colonne, present similar portraits early in the story;[16] however, Chaucer has chosen this moment in Book V, just before Criseyde's first temptation to turn from Troilus. Placing one suitor on each side of Criseyde dramatizes the choice she faces. On the one side sits the more concrete and realistic Diomede, whose ability to persuade and whose resolution to act are evident. On the other side stands the committed and idealized lover Troilus, whose inaction and inability to speak for himself have been obvious throughout the poem. Criseyde's choice involves not only the two warriors, one Greek and one Trojan, but also two kinds of love which the rivals represent. Her affair with Troilus has epitomized the highest ideals which courtly love can attain. The character of Diomede

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[16] Claes Schaar, The Golden Mirror, p. 192.

and the arguments of his suit suggest that although Criseyde has not yet experienced his love, it will be more earthy and, in the context of the religion of love, more secular. Both views of love, as Troilus sadly learns, fail to illustrate the worthier conception of spiritual love. The types of love between which Criseyde will choose mirror Troilus's earlier choice between spiritual and earthly love, and both Troilus and Criseyde choose the lesser.

The portrait of Troilus contrasts with that of Diomede:

> And Troilus wel woxen in highte,
> And complet formed by proporcioun
> So wel, that kynde it nought amenden myghte;
> Yong, fressh, strong, and hardy as lyoun;
> Trewe as steel in ech condicioun;
> Oon of the beste entecched creature,
> That is, of shal, whil that the world may dure.
> V, 827-833

It is difficult to imagine how Troilus might be improved. Except for his youth and height, Chaucer substitutes superlatives and similes for concrete details. Like Diomede he is hardy and strong, but Chaucer presents Troilus in less concrete terms. This balanced contrast intensifies the extremes of Criseyde's choice.

Criseyde's description includes terms of both general idealization and concrete detail:

> Criseyde mene was of hire stature,
> Therto so shap, of face, and ek of cheere,
> Ther myghte ben no fayrer creature.
> And ofte tyme this was hire manere:

To gon ytressed with hire heres clere
Doun by hire coler at hire bak byhynde,
Which with a thred of gold she wolde bynde.

And save hire browes joyneden yfere,
Ther nas no lakke, in aught I kan espien.
But for to speken of hire eyen cleere,
Lo, trewely, they writen that hire eyen,
That paradis stood formed in hire eyen.
And with hire riche beaute evere more
Strof love in hire ay, which of hem was more.

She sobre was, ek symple, and wys withal,
The best ynorissbed ek that myghte be,
And goodly of hire speche in general,
Charitable, estatlich, lusty, and fre;
Ne nevere mo ne lakkede hire pite;
Tendre herted, slydynge of corage;
But trewely, I kan nat telle hire age.
V, 806-826

Nowhere else in the poem is her visage presented so concretely. Here, in the Greek camp, Chaucer pictures Criseyde in greater detail than at any time when she was with Troilus (save the night of the consummation). But even on that night it was her body that was described, not her face. The complete portrait of Criseyde has developed as the poem and the love affair have progressed. Now, immediately preceding her unfaithfulness to Troilus, the full character and portrait of Criseyde emerge, and, consequently, she is "faced" completely, for the first time. Chaucer uses physical detail to show Criseyde as a real woman of this world, and her inclination toward the earthly should therefore be no surprise. She is ageless Woman who, though paradise may be in her eyes, can epitomize only earthly beauty and can offer only an earthly love.

Throughout descriptions of his main characters, then, Chaucer consistently underscores his major theme. He associates the lovers with Mars and Venus, not only to emphasize the parallel cosmic drama, but also to allude to their mythological counterparts. The many relationships between this poem and his "Complaint of Mars" suggest that Chaucer recalled the cosmic parallel he used in the earlier poem and perceived similarities between the two plots and the two themes. The varying techniques with which he delineates his characters indicate the relationship to the theme which these characters assume. The shifting image of Criseyde from that of angelic idealization to earthly reality exemplifies her mutable character and wavering experience in love. And the impressionistic image of Troilus sustains his idealistic view of experience.

Description in Troilus and Criseyde of course always fulfills the narrative needs and demands of the poem. But within these necessary passages Chaucer uses allusions, symbols, and metaphors which, in the authorial voice, indicate his artistic purpose and advance his thematic intent. The cosmos becomes a universal metaphor which dramatically parallels his moving story. Finally, his manipulation of images provides him with the requisite continuity and rationale which render his concluding statements consistent and necessary.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY NARRATIVE

Summary, because of its integral relationship to a narrative, is necessarily functional: it tells rather than shows. The narrator uses summary passages to provide transitions and to present subordinate episodes. Some summaries in Troilus and Criseyde, such as the opening review of the Trojan War, are synoptic, others are digests of actions. Within these passages in the narrator's voice, however, are opportunities for authorial design and gratuitous inference. If, for example, Chaucer incorporates into description a cosmic drama to parallel his story of Troilus, he utilizes in summary passages for its analogous relationship to his plot the Trojan setting and the fall of Troy. Moreover, much of the summary is characterized by figurative language and allusions; Chaucer repeats many metaphors and similes to unify passages, and his allusions to mythology and legend symbolize and parallel situations in the poem. The narrator's functional summaries, therefore, are often directed toward a dramatic or narrative purpose; nevertheless, within these passages Chaucer unifies, controls, and suggests his theme.

Since summary is inextricably bound to the development of plot and action, one must analyze it sequentially. The

following discussion of summary passages in Troilus and Criseyde will procede progressively through the five books; however, within each book I will group types and themes whenever necessary for emphasis or clarity.

I. BOOK I

Following the proem of Book I the narrator summarizes the events of the Trojan war with a straightforward exposition which provides the background for the story. The first stanza compresses the events of ten years in a single, concise sentence:

> It is wel wist how that the Grekes stronge
> In armes, with a thousand shippes, wente
> To Troiewardes, and the cite longe
> Assegeden, wel ten yer or they stente;
> And, in diverse wise and oon entente,
> The ravysshyng to wreken of Eleyne,
> By Paris don, they wroughten al hir peyne.
> I, 57-63

Although Chaucer's audience is familiar with the Troy story, his use of specific, concrete details helps make vivid the pervading conflict of the war and imminent collapse of Troy. This mood of impending disaster permeates the story and foreshadows the fates of the city and the lover, for Chaucer opens and closes his poem with factual summaries of the Trojan war. Periodically, the audience is reminded of the physical and mortal conflict which rages beyond the walls of besieged Troy. Chaucer expands the situation of Troy so that it becomes metaphorically applicable to the

situation of Troilus, whose very name derives from that of the city. Troilus, like the city, is in conflict, but he is besieged by the unconquerable forces of Fortuna and Love; the fates of the city and the lover coincide as both become victims of deception.

The next five stanzas summarize Calkas's defection. Each stanza in this passage serves a specific function, advancing the action swiftly yet purposefully: the first introduces Calkas, the second relates his desertion, the third tells of his reception by the Greeks, the fourth relates the reaction of the Trojans, and the last introduces his daughter, Criseyde. Each single-sentence stanza comprises a concise unit which sequentially narrows the scope of the preceding statement, "Assegeden, wel ten yer," to the first description of Criseyde, ". . . allone/Of any frend to whom she dorst hir mone."

The defection of Calkas, however, is significant to the story. Introducing Calkas as the first character in the story prepares for the logical necessities of the plot and foreshadows what may be considered a family trait--"slyding of courage." Calkas must be in the Greek camp so that he later may demand Criseyde and, thereby, alter the fortune of the lovers. Chaucer thus affects an ironic tone by introducing first an apparently unimportant character who later changes the course of the entire story.

This concise summary of Calkas's defection also informs the audience of the irrevocable fate of Troy. The priest of Apollo abandons the city because the god of light and moral purity--the healer and savior--foretells its destruction. Troilus also seems deprived of the spiritual principle which Apollo signifies, and it is Apollo, in his cosmic manifestation as Phebus, who frequently portends the catastrophe of Troilus's affair. Troilus sometimes prays to Apollo and sometimes curses him, yet the god and the sun pay no heed to the lover committed to his earthly and secular devotion. The associations and relationships established in this opening summary touch upon major thematic ideas which Chaucer reiterates throughout the poem.

Although he summarizes this antecedent action succinctly, Chaucer impresses the war firmly into the poem. Outside the walls of Troy the war continues to frustrate Greeks and Trojans as it has for ten years, and

> . . . Fortune on lofte
> And under eft gan hem to whielen bothe,
> Aftir his cors, ay whil thei were wrothe.
> I, 138-140

Though warriors are notoriously the playthings of Fortune, before this tale ends, Chaucer shows that lovers as well may follow the turn of her fateful wheel.

The following narrative unit presents the first significant dramatic scene in the poem--Troilus sees

Criseyde at the temple. Chaucer, though employing intermittent stanzas of description, commentary, and summary, still achieves unity through a symmetrical distribution of them. The opening summary flows into a short description and serves as a transition from the general events of the Trojan war to the specific time and setting of his story:

> But though that Grekes hem of Troie shetten,
> And hir cite bisegede al aboute,
> Hire olde usage nolde they nat letten,
> As for to honoure hir goddes ful devoute;
> But aldermost in honour, out of doute,
> Thei hadde a relik heet Palladion,
> That was hire trust aboven everichon.
>
> And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
> Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede . . .
> I, 148-156

April is, as mentioned earlier, an appropriate month in which to begin a love story, and the temple of Pallas is appropriate to Chaucer's story, for the fortunes of Troy and Troilus are bound to the Palladium in the temple. Troy can never be taken unless it loses the status; in this temple Troilus loses his heart to Criseyde, who later is taken from him by the same Diomede who steals the Palladium. Just as Chaucer has presented a parallel development through his cosmographic descriptions, he implies another collateral pattern by utilizing Trojan history and pagan deities. It remains ironic and perhaps ominous, however, that Troilus should find love in the temple of a goddess associated not with love but with war and wisdom. Chaucer controls his

collateral patterns and prophetic irony through his use of legendary and mythological allusions.

Following a description of Criseyde, Troilus's first entry is summarized:

> This Troilus, as he was wont to gide
> His yonge knyghtes, ladde hem up and down
> In thilke large temple on every side,
> Byholding ay the ladyes of the town,
> Now here, now there; for no devocioun
> Hadde he to non, to reven hym his reste,
> But gan to preyse and lakken whom hym leste.
> I, 183-189

With no concrete description, the narrator presents the character of Troilus through summary action. The mention of Troilus walking around the temple reinforces other comments which generate the circles within circles in both the action and setting. Such imagery focuses our attention upon the dramatic action that takes place in the temple. Troilus's general behavior in the temple, coupled with the explicit statement," . . . for no devocioun/Hadde he to non," depicts a character void of devotion, either spiritual or amorous. The loss of the spiritual principle implied in Calkas's defection is evident in the hero whose initial appearance shows impiety toward the goddess of wisdom and irreverence toward the goddess of love. It is necessary, in this context, that Troilus appear sacrilegious early in the poem; thereby, Chaucer can exemplify his theme by showing the dramatic contrast of Troilus when, after experiencing

love, he becomes more devout, reverent, and wise.

The stanza following the long commentary on the nature of love serves as a transition not only to move the setting from outside the temple to inside, but also to bring about the extreme change in Troilus's attitude toward love:

> Withinne the temple he wente hym forth pleyinge,
> This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
> On this lady, and now on that, lokynge,
> Where so she were of towne or of withoute;
> And upon cas bifel that thorugh a route
> His eye percede, and so depe it wente,
> Til on Criseyde it smot, and ther it stente.
> I, 267-273
>
> And sodeynly he wax therwith astoned . . . .
> I, 274

The action of entering the temple and the careful wording, "of towne or of withoute . . . so depe it wente" emphasize the dramatic focus of the scene. One is not surprised that Troilus's eye rests upon Criseyde, for the narrative structure of the poem has also been arrested with passages of description each time she has been mentioned thus far.

The stanzas summarizing Troilus's reaction to Criseyde play upon the imagery of looks and eyes. After his eye "stente" on Criseyde, a visual but idealistic description of her follows; she then "let falle/Hire look"; then " . . . of hire look in him ther gan to quyken/ . . . Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun/Unnethes wiste he how to loke or wynke . . . love hadde his dwellynge/Withinne the subtil stremes

of hire eyen . . . On other thing som tyme his look he caste,/And eft on hire . . . ." This emphasis on sight shows the vulnerability of the lover and the veneration of the beloved, for Criseyde remains idealized in the temple. Troilus's soul, peering through its window, the eye, is captivated by the goddess-like Criseyde. Although Troilus has been irreverent, his present experience appears spiritual, if not mystical. He freezes when he sees Criseyde, not unlike those men who turn to stone when seeing the Gorgon's head (which, incidentally, is depicted upon the aegis of the Palladium). Troilus's heart has been moved by what his soul has perceived, and, like Troy, he now encounters a conflict which through purgation, will prove to be both destructive and enlightening, painful yet regenerating.

The next narrative unit (twenty-seven stanzas) summarizes the effects of love upon Troilus. The opening stanzas strengthen the religious aura of Troilus's love:

> . . . as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
> That he hire saugh, and temple, and al the wise
> Right of hire look, and gan it newe avise.
>
> Thus gan he make a mirour of his mynde,
> In which he saugh al holly hire figure;
> And that he wel koude in his herte fynde,
> It was to hym a right good aventure
> To love swich oon, and if he dede his cure
> To serven hir, yit myghte he falle in grace . . . .
> I, 362-370

Although line 363 means that Troilus saw her at the temple (even when emendated "he saw hire a-temple" as in Robinson), the inference that he saw her as a temple is supported by Troilus's subsequent comments: he sees her figure as "al holly" but fears his "falle in grace" if he loves her. Love becomes, for Troilus, a religion with its own gods to address, its own temple to consecrate, and its own rites to perform. The religion of love and the religion of the gods remain separate notwithstanding Troilus's attempt to fuse them; the decision he must make is between the secular pursuits of earthly joy and the celestial comfort of divine love. Troilus's dilemma is not unlike that which confronts those of Chaucer's audience who have defied courtly love; like Troilus, they seek joy in earthly gratification rather than in divine love.

The following stanzas of summary continue to define these relationships which comprise the fabric of the theme. Chaucer is most explicit when he states, "alle other dredes weren from him fledde,/Bothe of thassege and his savacioun." (I, 464). The siege, both of Troy and of Troilus's heart, again shows the similarity of their situations, and the "savacioun" refers to Troilus's physical well being as well as his spiritual welfare. Although Robinson states that the usual theological application of "savacioun" is

inappropriate here,[1] the frequent allusions to religion and the transfer of love into religious terms would seem to support a theological interpretation.

Chaucer sometimes unifies summary passages through a progression of metaphors which suggest relationships or foreshadow action. While summarizing Troilus's condition, for example, he fashions metaphors of fire and heat:

> The fir of love, . . .
> I, 436
>
> And brende hym so in sondry wise ay newe.
> I, 440
>
> Forthi ful ofte, his hote fir to cesse,
> To sen hire goodly look he gan to presse;
> For therby to ben esed wil he wende,
> And ay the ner he was, the more he brende.
> I, 445-448
>
> For ay the ner the fir, the hotter is . . . .
> I, 449

Most of these figures depict the fire of love burning in Troilus's heart, but in the last statement Criseyde becomes the fire, the source of heat which burns Troilus.[2] In Troilus's later soliloquy the image is antithetical to

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[1] Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 816.

[2] One may note in passing that another reason for repeating images and figures denoting heat and fire is that Aries, in astrological symbolism, denotes the leading quality of fire, and, as indicated above (I, 156), the time of this section of the poem is probably while the sun is in Aries.

heat:

> But also cold in love towardes the
> Thi ladi is, as forst in wynter moone,
> And thow fordon, as snow in fir is soone.
> I, 523-525

The figure appears contradictory since Criseyde is as cold as frost and Troilus is like snow which melts in fire, but the juxtaposition of hot and cold with moist and dry further suggests the total and universal condition of Troilus's experience while suffering in love, and, before the end of the experience, the kindling of sexual passion billows into enlightened awareness of divine love.

The final summary passage in Book I, following Troilus's long conversation with Pandarus, relates the reactions of both men to Troilus's loving:

> For everi wight that hath an hous to founde
> He renneth naught the wek for to bygynne
> With rakel hond; but he wol bide a stounde,
> And sende his hertes line out fro withinne
> Aldirfirst his purpos for to wynne.
> Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
> And caste his werk ful wisly or he wroughte.
>
> But Troilus lay tho no lenger down,
> But up anon upon his stede bay,
> And in the feld he pleyde the leoun;
> Wo was that Grek that with hym mette a day.
> I, 1065-1075

The two metaphors appropriately depict the attitudes of the men and foreshadow the subsequent action. Pandarus becomes the architect of the matter, planning, designing, and

building the progress of the affair: Troilus no longer controls his future. Instead of fulfilling his desires in love, he mounts his bay steed to excel in war. Becoming the lion, Troilus confronts only those who have besieged his city--he ignores the more significant siege of his heart and soul.

II. BOOK II

Book II involves a frequent shifting of scenes as Pandarus executes his strategy for bringing the lovers together. Such shifting requires numerous short, transitional passages in the summary technique. When Pandarus carries letters between the lovers and arranges for the dinner at Deiphobus's house, the summary transitions are brief:

> This Pandare tok the lettre, and that by tyme
> A morwe, and to his neces paleis sterte . . . .
> II, 1093-1094

> . . . and whan that it was eve,
> And al was wel, he roos and take his leve.
> II, 1301-1302

> . . . and to Deiphebus wente he tho.
> II, 1402

> But to his neces hous, as streyght as lyne,
> He come, and fond hire from the mete arise
> And sette hym down, and spak right in this wise.
> II, 1461-1463

> Whan this was don, this Pandare up anon,
> To telle in short, and forth he gan to wende.
> II, 1492-1493

These terse, concise transitions portray the actions of

Pandarus and illustrate his dynamic and active function in the story. Transitions involving the movements of others (Troilus, Criseyde, Deiphobus, and Helen) are more detailed and more leisurely. Frequent use of co-ordinate conjunctions (especially "and") in these passages contributes to the episodic function of the transitions and further implies Pandarus's architectural function in the poem. Although the plot demands that the lovers be brought together, no thematic necessity motivates Pandarus's particular strategy; indeed, Chaucer invents the entire Deiphobus episode. The segments of Pandarus's episodic intrigue are linked by brief transitional passages which themselves serve, somewhat, as co-ordinate conjunctions, linking together the stages of Pandarus's plan and implying the irony of his futile attempts to interfere with the "lawe of kynde" and the works of fortune.

Occasionally, when the transition involves Pandarus and another character, Chaucer dismisses Pandarus in a concise line to emphasize other matters with greater detail, thereby suggesting his really subordinate position in the story. For example, when Pandarus ends his first interview with Criseyde, her actions are summarized in detail:

> With this he took his leve, and home he wente;
> And, lord! so he was glad and wel bygon!
> Criseyde arose, no lenger she ne stente,
> But streght into hire closet went anon,
> And sette hire down as stylle as any ston,

> And every word gan up and down to wynde,
> That he had seyd, as it com hire to mynde.
> II, 596-602

Again conjunctions link the stages of action, but the chronology is more closely knit, lending a fluidity to Criseyde's action which contrasts to the abruptness of Pandarus's coming and going.

In addition to using summary narrative for transitions between scenes, Chaucer employs this technique, on occasion, to summarize entire episodes and sequences of action. The opening action of Book II covers the eve and morning of Pandarus's visit to Criseyde:

> That Pandarus, for al his wise speche,
> Felte ek his parte of loves shotes keene,
> That koude he nevere so wel of lovyng preche,
> It made his hewe a day ful ofte greene;
> So shope it, that hym fil that day a teene
> In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
> And made, or it was day, ful many a wente.
>
> The swalowe, Proigne, with a sorwful lay,
> Whan morwen com, gan make hire waynentynge,
> Whi she forshapen was, and evere lay
> Pandare a-bedde, half in a slomberynge,
> Til she so neigh hym made hire cheterynge,
> How Tereux gan forth hire suster take,
> That with the noyse of hire he gan awake;
>
> And gan to calle, and dresse hym up to ryse,
> Remembryng hym his erand was to doone
> From Troilus, and ek his grete emprise,
> And caste and knew in good plite was the moone
> To doon viage, and took his wey ful soone
> Unto his neces paleys ther biside.
> II, 57-76

The opening stanza, revealing Pandarus's misery in love, implies a relationship which was touched upon in the first

book. Although Pandarus appears unsuccessful in his own love affair, he has chosen to manage Troilus's affair--with apparent success. This irony reflects the relationship the narrator has established with his audience: though he has failed in his own affairs, he intends to serve others in the ways of love. Regardless of how instrumental Pandarus may be, however, other forces determine the final outcome. This opening stanza, then, suggests Pandarus's ultimate impotence, which is made all the more ironic by contrast with his determined plotting and earnest manipulation.

The structure of the passage exemplifies Chaucer's technique of weaving authorial implications into a functional summary passage voiced by the narrator. The progressive stages of the summary action are condensed to verb phrases linked by "and": "lay/Pandare a-bedde . . . he gan awake . . . And gan to calle, and dresse hym up to ryse . . . And caste and knew in good plite was the monne . . . and took his wey ful soone." These essential clauses are embedded in various independent passages which imply and foreshadow symbolic relationships within Book II and touch upon thematic aspects of the poem. The swallow, a bird sacred to Venus, is specifically identified as Procne, hence alludes to a particularly violent and unhappy tale of love. This allusion to misfortune is reinforced with the later

appearance of the nightingale (II, 918), Procne's sister, Philomela, at Criseyde's window. Pandarus is awakened, therefore, by a lament over unfaithful love; yet he initiates his plan in spite of this ill omen. His casting of the moon to discover if it were astrologically propitious to pursue his plan that day draws attention to Pandarus's belief in the influence of the stars upon the affairs of man. He finds the moon "in good plite" and proceeds with his plan. His assumption, however, that other forces control man's destiny emphasizes one's limitations when confronted with the nature of love and reiterates this echo of Chaucer's theme.

Although Claes Schaar identifies this summary passage as a transitional link[3] it is much longer and more complex than Chaucer's typically brief, simple transitions. Moreover, since it begins the action of Book II, it remains itself an episode rather than a link between episodes. Only the last two lines provide a transitional function which links the episode to Pandarus's arrival at Criseyde's house:

> Whan he was come unto his neces place,
> "Wher is my lady?" to hire folk quod he;
> And they hym tolde, and he forth in gan pace,
> And fond two othere ladys sete, and she,
> Withinne a paved parlour, and they thre

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[3]Claes Schaar, Some Types of Narrative in Chaucer's Poetry, p. 204.

> Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
> Of the sege of Thebes, whil hem leste.
> II, 78-84

Apart from the half line of dialogue, the sense of the passage is summarization and relates how Pandarus finds Criseyde. The absence of concrete description calls attention to the activity rather than the setting, and each line progressively distracts attention from Pandarus's entrance; attention moves from Pandarus to the ladies seated in the parlor to the reading maiden. It finally settles on the subject of her reading--the siege of Thebes. The allusion recalls the obvious parallel of the siege of Troy and further suggests the image of universal siege by the potent forces of love, fortune, and planets which confine men's lives and limit their actions.

One of the longest episodes in Book II presented in summary narrative is the account of Criseyde's dream:

> So whan it liked hire to go to reste,
> And voided weren tho that voiden oughte,
> She seyde, that to slepen wel hire leste.
> Hire wommen sone unto hire bed hire broughte.
> Whan al was hust, tho lay she stille, and thoughte
> Of al this thing the manere and the wise; . . .
>
> A nyghtyngale, upon a cedre grene,
> Under the chambre wal ther as she lay,
> Ful loude song ayein the moone shene,
> Paraunter, in his briddes wise, a lay
> Of love, that made hire herte fressh and gay.
> That herkened she so longe in good entente,
> Til at the laste the dede slepe hire hente.
>
> And, as she slep, anon right tho hire mette,

> How that an egle, fethered whit as bon,
> Under hire brest his longe clawes sette,
> And out hire herte rente, and that anon,
> And dide his herte into hire brest to gon;
> Of which she nought agroos, ne no thyng smerte;
> And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.
> II, 911-931

Chaucer briskly dispenses with the mechanical action in order to elaborate on the more pertinent material in the episode. The nightingale (Philomela, Procne's sister) balances the swallow which was mentioned earlier. Ironically, Pandarus is awakened to the song of one of the legendary sisters and his niece is put to sleep by the song of the other. Although the nightingale represents a woman violated by lust, its song of love moves Criseyde's heart. Chaucer uses his symbols in this passage to unite the passages as well as to bind the actions of the real world with the meanings of the dream world, for as the nightingale moves Criseyde's heart in actuality, the eagle removes her heart symbolically. The selection of an eagle to represent a noble love is, of course, conventional in medieval literature.[4] The symbolic use of the eagle to represent Troilus, however, touches on Chaucer's theme and adds to the unity of symbolic images in the poem. Troilus has already been associated with Mars (II, 630) and is frequently related to Leo. Not only is the eagle associated with this god of

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[4]Root, Troilus and Criseyde, p. 450.

war, it is the equivalent in the air of the lion on earth.[5] Since the eagle is associated with the sun and the elements of air and fire, and is thereby symbolic of life and the life-giving principle, an exchange of hearts with this bird appropriately signifies the first stirrings of love in Criseyde. This symbolic eagle contributes to the unfolding theme of Chaucer's poem, for it defines the religious struggle between the spiritual principle and the secular world: indeed, this symbolism occurs often in Romanesque art.[6] Although Chaucer chooses to summarize this dream, then, he utilizes it to strengthen the structural unity of his poem and to emphasize the implications of his theme, that love is a divine endowment which unites the celestial and terrestrial realms and is manifest on physical and spiritual planes.

In addition to compressing whole episodes and conveying the necessary transitions between scenes, summary narrative condenses action within scenes. Throughout the entire interview between Pandarus and Criseyde (over 500 lines) only one stanza of summary is used:

> So after this, with many wordes glade,
> And friendly tales, and with merie cheere,

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[5] J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), p. 87.

[6] Ibid.

> Of this and that they pleide, and gonnen wade,
> In many an unkouth, gladde, and depe matere,
> As frendes doon whan thei ben met yfere;
> Tyl she gan axen hym how Ector ferde,
> That was the townes wal, and Grekes yerde.
> II, 148-154

Elsewhere in the conversation Chaucer repeats every word to reveal character and exhibit the subtlety of Pandarus's strategy. This summary, however, enriches the scene with details that would have otherwise been awkward to include: the relationship between Pandarus and Criseyde is revealed in summary action as well as through their conversation; the lapse of time is more realistically accounted for; the general attitude of the town toward Hector is made obvious; finally, Pandarus fulfills his intent for he is merely toying with Criseyde until she introduces the subject of Hector, "the townes wal, and the Grekes yerde." This unusual mixed figure again recalls the interminable war and reinforces the image and condition of siege which surrounds the dramatic action. Chaucer's manipulation of narrative techniques, then, is not unlike Pandarus's manipulations within the story and though subtle they are effective.

The dinner sequence at Deiphobus's house suggests another parallel situation in the poem. Since the scene is Chaucer's original invention, one might justifiably scrutinize the gratuitous episode for suggestive phraseology voiced by the narrator. The scene begins with the introduc-

tion of Helen; Criseyde follows in a somewhat subordinate position. Throughout the scene, until her confrontation with Troilus (Book III), Criseyde remains suppressed while Helen, Deiphobus, Pandarus, and Troilus occupy most of the foreground:

> The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme
> Of meltid, that the faire queene Eleyne
> Shoop hire to ben, an houre after the prime,
> With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde feyne;
> But as his suster, homly, soth to seyne,
> She com to dyner in hire pleyne entente.
> But god and Pandare wist al what this mente.
>
> Com ek Criseyde, al innocent of this,
> Antigone, hire suster Tarbe also.
> II, 1555-1563

This focus on Helen, a Greek who lives with her lover in Troy, foreshadows the case of Criseyde, who will soon be in a similar situation in the Greek camp. The duplicity of Helen, and, by extension, of Criseyde, is further implied in the tone and ambiguity of this stanza. One wonders why "she nolde feyne" in regard to Deiphobus. In the last line "this" could refer to the dinner or to Helen's "pleyne entente." The modification of "suster" with "homly, soth to seyne" seems unnecessarily redundant unless "suster" connotes something which the worldly Pandarus (and perhaps Chaucer's audience) knows full well. It is consonant with Chaucer's ironic sense to imply that this dinner serves not only to initiate an affair between two new lovers, but also to further intimacies between two

older ones.

Chaucer interrupts the passage with commentary, interjects a few spoken comments, and then summarizes the conversation:

> Compleyden ek Eleyne of his siknesse
> So feythfully, that pite was to here;
> And every wight gan wexen for accesse
> A leche anon, and seyde: "in the manere
> Men curen folk; this charme I wol yow leere."
> But ther sat oon, al liste hire nat to teche;
> That thoughte: "best koude I yit ben his leche."
>
> After compleynte, hym gonnen they to preyse,
> As folk don yit, whan som wight hath bygonne
> To preise a man, and up with pris hym reise
> A thousand fold yit hyer than the sonne:
> "He is, he kan that fewe lordes konne";
> And Pandarus, of that they woulde afferme,
> He naught forgat hire preisynge to conferme.
> II, 1576-1589

The effect of this passage is impressionistic. It is achieved by juxtaposing summary narrative with dramatic discourse. The spoken lines, for the most part, remain anonymous and so interwoven into the summary that the impression of an extensive scene is conveyed in the two short stanzas. Chaucer uses this technique elsewhere in the poem (when Troilus rides past Criseyde's house and while Troilus awaits Criseyde's return from the Greek camp) to effect general impression rather than dramatic scenes. This summary passage with intermingling discourse--running summary--has the advantage of condensing action without robbing it of its dramatic power; it is active

rather than passive and arouses a sense of immediacy. The narrator uses summary narrative, then, both to expand and contract, to speed and to retard his story. The last stanza of summary narrative in Book II clears the scene of Deiphobus and Helen so that Criseyde can meet Troilus alone. The suggestive ambiguity found in the stanza which introduces Helen returns in the tone of this stanza:

> Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfolde
> In ernest gret; so dede Eleyne the queene;
> And, romyng outward, faste it gonne byholde,
> Downward a steire, and in an herber greene,
> This ilke thing they redden hem betwene;
> And largely, the mountaunce of an houre,
> Thei gonne on it to reden and to poure.
> II, 1702-1708

The detail of this summary and the parenthetical descriptions again seem unnecessary unless more is implied than what is stated. The details of events are emphasized more than the apparent purpose of the action--the removal of Helen and Deiphobus from the scene--would seem to justify. Moreover, though Chaucer states that they study the letter for an hour, no mention of the contents ever appears. If Chaucer intends to imply a romantic relationship between them, he is extremely subtle. He fails to develop this suggestion elsewhere in the poem. The action <u>does</u>, however, contribute to the mood appropriate for the subsequent meeting, for the quiet reading in the garden setting suggests the plaintive atmosphere for the lovers' first meeting.

III. BOOK III

The use of summary narrative for transitions between scenes is less frequent and more controlled in Book III than in the preceding books. Transitions involving characters other than Pandarus show his subordinate role in the plot, and afford a leisurely pace to the book. This, in turn, permits a more concentrated focus on the dramatic episodes. When Criseyde leaves Deiphobus's house, for example, notice of her departure is included in a sentence devoted primarily to a conversation about her:

> She took hire leve at hem ful thriftily,
> As she wel koude, and they hire reverence
> Unto the fulle deden, hardyly,
> And wonder wel speken in hire absence
> Of hire, in preysing of hire excellence,
> Hire governaunce, hire wit; and hire manere
> Comeneden, it joie was to here.
> III, 211-217

Those characteristics of Criseyde which are praised include none which Troilus, in his idealization of her, has noted. The speakers ignore her beauty, stature, and angelic features, whereas her social and intellectual characteristics evoke praise and render a more realistic conception of her character.

When Pandarus later goes to Criseyde's house to invite her to dinner, the transition is presented in a largely sentence containing certain distracting details:

> Now is there litel more for to doone,
> But Pandare up, and shortly for to seyne,
> Right sone upon the chaungynge of the moone
> Whan lightles is the world a nyght or tweyne,
> And that the wolken shop hym for to reyne,
> He streyght o morwe unto his nece wente.
> III, 547-552

Although the changing of the moon may cause the climatic conditions Pandarus desire, contrarywise, it implies a detrimental foreboding since its conjunction with Venus is malefic at that time. This transitional summary, then, shifts the scene while focusing on manifestations of change in the heavens, in the war, in the characters, and, of course, in Troilus's fortune. This frequent attention to change imbues the poem with the instability of Troilus's position and reflects the mutability of earthly life and secular love.

Summary narrative to condense action within scenes clusters around only three episodes in Book III: Pandarus's invitation to Criseyde for dinner, the dinner itself together with the subsequent preparations for her spending the night, and the climactic consummation.

When Pandarus first arrives to invite Criseyde, the summary establishes the tone for the conversation:

> Whan he was there, he gan anon to pleye
> As he was wont, and at hym self to jape;
> And finally he swor and gan hire seye,
> By this and that, she sholde hym nought escape,
> Ne make hym lenger after hire to gape;
> But certeynly she moste, by hire leve,
> Come soupen in his house with hym at eve.
> III, 554-560

The action is playful, but undertones of Pandarus's plotting persist ("she shoulde hym nought escape") when he slips his invitation into the conversation. Pandarus's duplicity is emphasized by his swearing (1, 556). Twice the narrator states that he swears--"softe he swor hire in hire ere" (566) snd "He swor hir nay, for he was out of towne" (570)--before he finally expands Pandarus's oaths in the final stanza of this passage:

> He swor hire this by stokkes and by stones,
> And by the goddes that in hevene dwelle,
> Or elles were hym levere, fel and bones,
> With Pluto kyng as depe ben in helle
> As Tantalus . . . .
>
> III, 589-593

This swearing includes all the elements and regions of the universe: heaven, earth, and hell; animal ("fel and bones"), vegetable ("stokkes"), and mineral ("stones"); earth, fire ("helle"), air, and water (by association with Tantalus). The allusion to Tantalus is particularly apt, for it is in the cause of Troilus's frustration that Pandarus invites Criseyde, and, since Tantalus is punished for revealing secrets of the gods, it is ironic that Pandarus (whose machinations will reveal the secrets of love to the lovers) swears by the personification of unfulfilled desire. In addition to the obvious and ominous associations connected with Pluto is the rape of Persephone. Although Criseyde is not violently abused at Pandarus's house, seduction

clearly motivates the invitation. The ominous overtones of Pluto and his influence are further strengthened when one recalls that Pluto is the son of Saturn and the brother of Jupiter, the representative planets which conjoin to bring about the consummation of the lovers and portend the eventual catastrophe. Condensing Pandarus's speech in a summary passage permits Chaucer to juxtapose allusions and suggest meanings which could become ambiguous in dramatic discourse or distracting in a commentary.

The summary of Criseyde's arrival at Pandarus's house includes, among other details, the mention of Antigone. An original creation of Chaucer, she occupies one episode (singing to Criseyde in the garden) and accompanies Criseyde both to Deiphobus's dinner and to Pandarus's house. The name, of course, alludes to the story of Thebes (mentioned upon Pandarus's arrival at Criseyde's house and elaborately summarized in Book V by Cassandra) and the willful determination of Antigone to violate the secular law of her land in order to uphold divine law.[7] These allusions, when associated with Criseyde, present an

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[7]The relationships are further complicated by Chaucer's inventive naming of Criseyde's mother, Argia (IV, 762), for her namesake is Polynices's wife, sister-in-law of the Theban Antigone.

ironic contrast to Troilus's beloved who commits her love to a physical, earthly, and secular experience and is unmindful of a higher, divine order.

The narrator swiftly summarizes the activities of the supper and the entertainments of the evening in a concise but detailed passage:

> . . . whan that she was come
> With alle joie, and alle frendes fare,
> Hire em anon in armes hath hire nome,
> And after to the soper, alle and some,
> Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette;
> God woot, ther was no deynte for to fette.
>
> And after soper gonnen they to rise,
> At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and glade,
> And wel was hym that koude best devyse
> To liken hire, or that hire laughen made.
> He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.
> But at the laste, as every thyng hath ende,
> She took hire leve, and nedes wolde wende.
> III, 604-616

The additive construction of the passage demonstrates Chaucer's ability to move smoothly yet swiftly through supplementary episodes, whereas the abbreviated construction of line 614 reveals his success in presenting a totality of effect with impressionistic details.[8]

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[8] The allusion to Wade remains one of the most exaspirating allusions in the poem, for insufficient data obscure the significance (or lack of it). One known detail of the story involves the threatened death of the hero if his father does not return within an appointed time, but to apply this parallel to the subsequent circumstances of Troilus and Criseyde would tax conjecture.

The stanzas which summarize the preparations for staying the night swiftly progress through stages of the activity, punctuated with a description of the storm. The raging forces outside the house contrast with the comforting words and insidious intrigue within. The passage is charged with implications which heighten the suspense and irony of the situation:

> Ther was no more, but hereafter soone,
> The voide dronke . . . .
> III, 673-674

> Tho Pandarus, hire em, right as hym oughte,
> With wommen swiche as were hire most aboute,
> Ful glad unto hire beddes syde hire broughte.
> III, 680-682

> There was no more to skippen nor to traunce,
> But boden go to bedde, with meschaune.
> III, 690-691

> But Pandarus, that wel koude eche a del
> The olde daunce, and every point therinne.
> III, 694-695

The pun on "voide," the unnecessary iteration of Pandarus's identity, the ambiguity of "meschaunce," and the connotation of the "olde daunce" all contribute to the duplicity of Pandarus's intent and ambiguity of his position. The passage illustrates Chaucer's habit of adopting detailed summary narrative in preparation for a vital dramatic episode.

The first summary passage of the consummation episode contains a detailed digression on Troilus's sighs:

> Therwith he gan hire faste in armes take,
> And wel a thousand tymes gan he syke,

> Nat swich sorwful sikes as men make
> For sorwe, or elles whan that folk ben sike,
> But esy sykes, swiche as ben to like,
> That shewed his affeccioun withinne;
> Of swiche sikes koude he nat blynne.
> III, 1345-1351

Seldom does Chaucer exhibit such detail in summary narrative as in this careful distinction between sighs, but through this single refinement he conveys the fragile mood of the setting and the inspired feelings of Troilus. His quiet sighs--the exhalations of his soul--express neither sickness nor sadness, but an inner, spiritual feeling; they contrast with the violent winds outside the house and prepare for the cessation of frustrated turmoil which the consummation seemingly achieves.

In another brief summary passage the narrator epitomizes the joy which the lovers celebrate:

> And diden al hire myght, syn they were oon,
> For to recoveren blisse and ben at ese,
> And passed wo with joie countrepeise.
> III, 1391-1393

The woes of Troilus and the fears of Criseyde are now overcome with the blissful balm of love. Their love unites the lovers in a single conception ("they were oon") which embraces both woe and joy, counterpoises pain with bliss. But if secular love compensates for its inherent suffering and embodies the fullest joy of earthly experience, it also subsumes its inherent limitations. The narrator's celebration of secular love betokens therefore, the superlative of

divine love.

The longest sequence of summary narrative in Book III (105 lines: 421-490; 512-546) relates the time that passes after the first meeting of the lovers. These stanzas tell how Troilus dissembles his love for Criseyde, how they meet occasionally in secret, and how Criseyde loves Troilus because he exhibits the qualities of an ideal courtly lover. These ideal qualities of Troilus and the desirable qualities of Criseyde add dramatic emphasis to Chaucer's theme by showing that even this most perfect union is subject to the mutability and defects of the courtly, secular love experience.

This passage directly summarizes the activities and feelings of the major characters between May third and June twenty-first (the day on which the sun enters Cancer). This would be the period when the sun travels through Gemini, the attributes of which are duality, mutability, and inversion. Gemini is influential in bringing opposite qualities together, a condition implied in this passage through references to night and day, Mars and Venus, Troilus and Criseyde. Appropriately, the phase brings Troilus and Criseyde together under Gemini, but this sign is, in other respects, ominous. Though the influence of Gemini contributes to the union of Troilus and Criseyde, who figuratively become one under the detrimental sign of

Cancer, the ruler of Gemini is Mercury, the messenger of the gods and the guide of souls, who is characterized by his unlimited capacity for transformation. The general transformation of Criseyde from idealized angel to realistic woman and the turning of Troilus's fortune revolve about the dramatic action of this central book which is overseen by Mercury under Gemini, while the peril of their climactic union is portended by Saturn and Jupiter under Cancer.

The long passage of summary narrative which relates the lovers' activities and elation after their night of bliss balances the earlier summary preceding the eventful night. Their subsequent meetings are impressionistically condensed into a summary of a single tryst which ends with an alba:

> But cruel day, so weylawey the stounde,
> Gan for taproche, as they by sygnes knewe,
> For which hem thoughte feelen dethes wownde;
> So wo was hem, that changen gan hire hewe,
> And day they gonnen to despise al newe,
> Callying it traitour, envyous, and worse;
> And bitterly the dayes light thei corse.
> III, 1695-1701

> But nedes day departe hem moste soone,
> And whan hire speche don was and hire cheere,
> They twynne anon as they were wont to doone,
> And setten tyme of metyng eft yfeere;
> And many a nyght they wroughte in this mannere.
> And thus Fortune a tyme ledde in joie
> Criseyde and ek this Kynges sone of Troie.
> III, 1709-1715

Although it is traditional for lovers to lament the coming

of day, Troilus's cursing of the "dayes light" (i.e., Phebus, Apollo, and by extension, Christ) reflects not only theological and astrological sacrilege, but also contradicts his earlier worship of Apollo, whose aid he invoked and, evidentally, received. The lovers meet in the dark and deceptive night of love and reject the bright light of the day's divine eye. The peril of Troilus's misdirected piety to secular idolatry and the ephemeral nature of their love is foreshadowed in the deliberate phrasing of the last couplet which stresses the transience of joy ("Fortune a tyme ledde in joie") and the heights from which this "kynges sone" falls.

The summary of Troilus's vita nuova is lyrical in its exuberance:

> In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singynges,
> This Troilus gan al his lif to lede;
> He spendeth, jousteth, maketh festeynges;
> He yeveth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede,
> And held aboute hym ay, withouten drede,
> A world of folk, as com hym wel of kynde,
> The fressheste and the beste he koude fynde;
>
> That swich a vois of hym was and a stevene
> Thorughout the world, of honour and largesse,
> That it up rong unto the yate of hevene.
> III, 1716-1725

Troilus's life is filled with such joy and bounty that reports of him spread throughout the world even to the gates of heaven. But though the gates of heaven are open to the lover, he chooses to ignore the celestial haven and surrounds himself with "a world of folk." Chaucer continues

to weave his thematic threads into the narrator's summaries.

The metaphor in the following summary stanza denotes the strength of the lovers' bond, yet suggests an entanglement beyond control:

> The goodlihede or beaute which that kynde
> In any other lady hadde iset
> Kan nat the mountaunce of a knotte unbynde,
> About his herte, of al Criseydes net.
> He was so narwe ymasked and iknet,
> That it undon on any maner syde,
> That nyl nat be, for aught that may bitide.
> III, 1730-1736

Ironically, Troilus is enmeshed in Criseyde's net although it is Pandarus's trap which has brought them together. Troilus is not only besieged; he is also physically and spiritually ensnared. He cannot untangle himself from this secular affair until death frees his soul; neither beauty nor "goodlihede" (perhaps a pun on "Godhede") can release Troilus from his commitment nor from his desire to be entrapped.

This passage also illustrates Chaucer's use of metaphor in summary passages to foreshadow, parallel, and allude to other passages. The metaphoric knot and net of this stanza are repeated in a summary passage of Book V where, speaking of Criseyde, the narrator states that Troilus "Shal knotteles thorughout hire herte slide," (V, 769) whereas Diomede contrives "into his net Criseydes herte brynge." (V, 776) Chaucer's Reiteration

metaphors and images in summary passages unifies correlative themes by linking significant parallels and clarifying summary passages.

Chaucer continues to emphasize the earthiness of Troilus's state in these summary passages:

> In tyme of trewe, on haukyng wolde he ride,
> Or elles honte boor, bere, or lyoun;
> The smale bestes leet he gon beside.
> III, 1779-1781

Apart from the symbolic connotation of the boar (lasciviousness) and the bear (base instincts), the regal lion implies Troilus's conquest of his earthly domain. The ambivalence of his situation is counterpoised, however, by the continued presence of Criseyde, who peers at him "As fresshe as faucon comen out of muwe"--the hawker is hawked as the lover is loved. But this hunting occurs only during times of truce. The Trojan War pervades these lulls in the besieged city, and Troilus soon discovers that his peace in love is a short-lived calm in his conflict with Fortune.

Finally, in the last summary stanza of Book III, Chaucer binds together all the threads of his theme:

> And though that he be come of blood roial,
> Hym liste of pride at no wight for to chace;
> Benigne he was to ech in general,
> For which he gat hym thank in every place.
> Thus wolde Love, yheried be his grace!
> That pride, envye, ire, and avarice
> He gan to fle, and everich other vice.
> III, 1800-1806

Love would be his grace, and that grace helps him overcome four of the seven deadly sins. The obvious omission of lechery, gluttony, and sloth strengthens the thematic statement: despite the glory and celebration of secular love and its concomitant benefits, it lacks the perfection and plenitude of spiritual love.

IV. BOOK IV

The narrative structure of Book IV mirrors the structure of Book I: the opening summarizes the events of the war, a public meeting determines the course of action, a period of woe follows, and the remainder of the book involves a single scene. This similarity between the two books suggests that they both begin significant phases of Troilus's story, for as the events in Book I establish the situation from which Troilus moves from "wo to wele," the circumstances of Book IV promote his fortune "out of joie." As in Book I, therefore, few summaries are used for transitions, and most of these are direct and brief. The account of Troilus's departure from the Trojan Senate, for example, suggests grief through brevity:

> Departed out of parlement echone,
> This Troilus, withouten wordes mo,
> Into his chaumbre speede hym faste allone,
> But if it were a man of his or two,
> The which he bad out faste for to go,
> Bycause he wolde slepen, as he sede,
> And hastily upon his bed hym leyde.
> IV, 218-224

"Spedde . . . faste . . . hastily" suggest the tension explicit in the action since Troilus must restrain expression of his grief until he is alone. Here, the narrator performs his art with skill, for the expansion and contraction of summary passages and the diction and tone of their presentation are adapted to the emotional needs of the poem while fulfilling the narrative needs of the action.

The direct brevity of other transitions implies that the movements and actions they relate are unimportant in the context of the more dramatic action that takes place in Book IV. When Pandarus intercedes for Troilus with Criseyde, "Pandare, which that sent from Troilus,/Was to Criseyde . . . ." or when he leaves, "Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte," only brief, sometimes fragmentary, lines provide the transitions. The same is true when Troilus visits Criseyde:

> But whan that it was tyme for to go,
> Ful pryvely hym self, withouten mo,
> Unto hire com, as he was wont to doone.
> IV, 1124-1126

However, when he leaves, Chaucer slows the action by lengthening the departure to two stanzas:

> But after that they longe ypleyned hadde,
> And ofte ykist, and streite in armes folde,
> The day gan rise, and Troilus hym cladde,
> And rewfullich his lady gan byholde,
> As he that felte dethes cares colde.
> And to hire grace he gan hym recomaunde;

Wher hym was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

For mannes hed ymagynen ne kan,
Nentendement considere, ne tonge telle,
The cruel paynes of this woful man,
That passen every torment down in helle.
For whan he saugh that she ne myghte dwelle,
Which that his soule out of his herte rente,
Withouten more, out of the chaumbre he wente.
IV, 1688-1701

This parting from their final night together is expanded in order to suggest its significance. The personal interjections of the narrator and his refusal to elaborate upon the parting in detail heightens the emotional tension, whereas the periodic structure of the final sentence--the last sentence of the stanza, of the departure, and of the book--emphasizes the finality of their separation.

The opening passage of Book IV again evokes images of the war while summarizing the capture of Antenor. The passage moves forward deliberately as each stanza presents a necessary step in the progress: the first establishes the time and astrological influence ("whan that Phebus shynyng is/Upon the brest of Hercules lyoun"); the transitional second stanza brings the armies together; the third relates the battle; the fourth announces the capture; the fifth brings the news to Calkas; and the last introduces Calkas's speech. Steadily and swiftly, then, the narrator unfolds the action of the plot, yet directs attention to the dramatic presentation of Calkas's argument. Moreover, the

image of the Trojan war again correlates the fates of Troy and Troilus, for "the folk of Troie/Dredden to lese a gret part of hire joie." This historic parallel is but another device which Chaucer uses to complement and unify his theme.

The subsequent section summarizes the meeting of the Trojan Senate. Compression in this scene concentrates the dramatic responses to the events through a subordination of the events themselves. Troilus's reaction to the proposal, for example, is the chief concern of the following stanza:

> This Troilus was present in the place
> When axed was for Antenor Criseyde;
> For which ful soone chaungen gan his face,
> As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde;
> But, natheles, he no word to it seyde,
> Lest men sholde his affecctioun espye.
> IV, 148-153

In spite of his grief, he must dissemble his feelings, for again love forces him to hide unnaturally the true feelings of his heart. Rather than give way to emotional excesses, as he has been wont to do throughout the poem, he now, when faced with the loss of his beloved, debates with himself. This reveals an aspect of his character which had not been emphasized earlier. Love encourages him to fight for her, but reason warns that he should first obtain Criseyde's consent, for she would be displeased if he exposed their secret love inadvertently. But the argument is a foolish

one; it implies that he would rather lose her than incur her ire for exposing their love. If this be the effect of love, then love impairs reason and judgment.

His defective reasoning also impairs action:

> For which he gan deliberen for the beste,
> That though the lordes wolde that she wente,
> He wolde late hem graunte what hem leste,
> And telle his lady first what that they mente;
> And whan that she hadde seyd hym hire entente,
> Thereafter wolde he werken also blyve,
> Theigh al the world ayeyn it wolde stryve.
> IV, 169-175

Such a passage smacks of rationalization rather than resolution as he discovers excuses for inaction. Troilus appears helplessly immobilized, requiring Criseyde's "assent" and "entente" before knowing for certain what to do. Moreover, Troilus does not act as this passage would direct, for he does not consult Criseyde until long after she learns of the proposed exchange. Love seems to have sapped Troilus of the very virtues that inured him to love: he reasons poorly, he is indecisive, and he fails to act when action is necessary. Chaucer's choice of summary narrative technique in this passage accentuates Troilus's inaction; dramatic scene would be too dynamic and commentary would interrupt the progression of the passage.

The confusion and chaos depicted in the following stanza adapt summary technique to the situation and express Troilus's state:

> The noyse of peple up sterte thanne at ones,
> As breme as blase of straw iset on fire;
> For infortune it wolde, for the nones,
> They shoden hire confusion desire.
> IV, 183-186

The poor judgment of the Trojans is an extension of the poor judgment of Troilus, for as Chaucer reminds his audience in subsequent stanzas, Antenor's treachery leads to the downfall of Troy. Though Chaucer could have summarized this episode in fewer stanzas, he employs his narrative technique to reveal the effects of love upon Troilus and to show that the imminent fates of Troy and Troilus are commingled in the ill judgment of the public assembly.

After Troilus is settled and alone in his room, a summary passage relates his woe in an unusual simile:

> Right as the wylde bole bygynneth sprynge
> Now her, now ther, idarted to the herte,
> And of his deth roreth in compleynynge,
> Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,
> Smytyng his brest ay with his fistes smerte;
> His hed to the wal, his body to the grounde,
> Ful ofte he swapte, hym selven to confounde.
> IV, 239-245

Chaucer compares Troilus to a bull, not to the lion or eagle, as he did earlier. This association with an animal symbolic of sexual virility rather than one representing spiritual or kingly ideals suggests a descent in Troilus's character which correlates with the descent of his fortune. The image of the dart recalls that of Cupid's arrow

striking Troilus's heart (an event which took place under the influence of Taurus, the bull) and again exemplifies Chaucer's iteration of images in summary passages to unify thematic relationships.

At the conclusion of Troilus's diatribe against fortune appears another passage which summarizes his feelings:

> A thousand sikes, hotter than the gleede,
> Out of his brest ech after other wente,
> Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to feede,
> For which his woful teris nevere stente;
> And shortly, so his peynes hym to-rente,
> And wex so maat, that joie nor penaunce
> He feleth non, but lith forth in a traunce.
> IV, 337-343

The peculiar phrasing of line 342 echoes thematic overtones that resound throughout the work. Why should Chaucer mention penance unless Troilus feels guilty of violating religious laws? Does not courtly love--the only religious system that remains constant in both the Trojan and medieval settings of the poem--defy religious ideals? Clearly! But Chaucer further complicates the matter by coupling penance with joy--the dual rewards of secular love. Such an association of penance with religious matters indicates Chaucer's concern with this aspect of Troilus's plight.

Following a long dramatic scene between Pandarus and Troilus, the narrator summarizes Criseyde's reaction to

the news:

> The swifte Fame, which that false thynges
> Egal reporteth like the thynges trewe,
> Was thorughout Troi yfled with preste wynges
> Fro man to man, and made this tale al newe,
> How Calkas doughter, with hire brighte hewe,
> At parlement, withouten wordes more,
> Ygraunted was in chaunge of Antenore.
>
> The whiche tale anon right as Criseyde
> Hadde herd, she which that of hire fader roughte,
> As in this cas, right nought, ne whan he deyde,
> Ful bisily to Jupiter bisoughte
> Yeve hym meschaunce that this tretis broughte.
> IV, 659-670

The smooth construction of the single sentence in the first stanza expresses well the speed with which rumor flies through the city and again exhibits Chaucer's ability to accomodate poetic techniques to narrative ends. The second stanza juxtaposes Calkas and Jupiter; having cursed her earthly father, Criseyde beseeches the heavenly father to bring misfortune upon whoever made the proposal. This would be her own father, but ironically, Calkas appears to have as much influence over her fate as does Jupiter. The forces which influence the lovers' fortune become more numerous and interfused as the catastrophe nears.

Irony is the essential tone of the following passage as well. Chaucer presents the visit of townspeople in summary narrative, including impressionistic fragments of dialogue, which, in the context of Criseyde's sorrow, heighten the irony. The women arrive "For pitous joie, and

wenden hire delite," while Criseyde thinks on her unhappiness. Anonymously, their trite and misfounded consolation emphasizes the disparity between their intention and their effect. Even her tears "thilke fooles" vainly mistake for her sorrow at having to part from them. This presentation accentuates Criseyde's sorrow by ironic contrast to the inanities of these foolish women and by satiric display of their ignorance and vanity.

The remaining summary narrative in Book IV involves the final tryst of Troilus and Criseyde. After he summarizes their tearful meeting, the narrator continues:

> But whan hire woful weri goostes tweyne
> Retourned ben ther as hem oughte to dwelle,
> And that somwhat to wayken gan the peyne
> By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle
> Of hire teeris, and the herte unswelle,
> With broken vois, al hoors forshright, Criseyde
> To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde . . . .
> IV, 1142-1148

Prefacing Criseyde's short exclamation with this long introductory clause detracts attention from what she says; Chaucer emphasizes, in this way, his summary of their emotional state rather than the content of the speech. Although Chaucer is following Boccaccio closely in this passage, he translates "spiriti" to mean spiritual soul ("goostes") rather than the vital spirit, natural spirit, or animal spirit of medieval physiology.[9] This change

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[9]Root, Troilus and Criseyde, p. 521.

heightens the spiritual interpretation of love and the religious implications of the theme.

When Criseyde swoons after her exclamation, Chaucer repeats this idea:

> Hire woful spirit from his propre place,
> Right with the word, alwey o poynt to pace--

The lines are emphasized with the parenthetical dashes, and "propre place" echoes line 1143. The phrasing of this passage and the detail with which Chaucer summarizes this scene conduce to the suggestion that their souls are misdirected. Faced as they are with grief, they find, now, no consolation in their love and no resolution to their problem.

These threads are further woven in a subsequent summary stanza where Troilus, thinking Criseyde dead, considers suicide:

> And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
> His swerd anon out of his shethe he twighte,
> Hym self to slen, how sore that hym smerte,
> So that his soule hire soule folwen myghte,
> Ther as the doom of Mynos wolde it dighte;
> Syn love and cruel Fortune it ne wolde,
> That in this world he lenger lyven sholde.
> IV, 1184-1190

The apparent contradiction of Troilus's intent is not of primary concern here; Troilus's doom would differ from Criseyde's if he commits suicide, and his soul would not follow hers. The significance of the passage lies in the assumption (on Troilus's part) that both lovers would

probably suffer in hell, for the judgments of Minos tend toward punishment for earthly sins. Although Troilus assumes that they will suffer together, since both share the same sin, Chaucer states in his envoy that their sin is not in having loved at all but in having loved wrongly. Troilus suffers from love, yes! But his "double sorwe" results because he sought perfect joy and eternal bliss in secular love.

The last summary passage before they part reveals Troilus's misgiving and his difficulty in trusting her:

> This Troilus, with herte and erys spradde,
> Herde al this thyng devysen to and fro;
> And verraylich hym semed that he hadde
> The selve wit; but yit to late hire go,
> His herte mysforyaf hym evere mo.
> But finaly he gan his herte wreste
> To trusten hire, and took it for the beste.
>
> For which the grete furie of his penaunce
> Was queynt with hope; and therwith hem bitwene
> Bigan for joie thamorouse daunce.
> And as the briddes, whan the sonne is shone
> Deliten in hire song in leves grene,
> Right so the wordes that they spake yfeere
> Delited hem, and made hire hertes clere.
>
> IV, 1422-1435

The limitations of secular love and the pathetic naivete' of the lovers become fully evident in the ironic resolution implied in this summary. Troilus listens to Criseyde's plan seemingly like a gullible novice ("with herte and erys spradde"). Although his heart has misgivings, he suppresses them to plunge again into the erotic delights of earthly love.

The simile of the second stanza implies, by ironic contrast, not only the speed with which a grieved heart might change, but also the ease with which hope can deceive. These sublunary lovers show the inferiority of their love by their failure to withstand separation and their failure to transcend the physical limitations of their relationship. The gods, which they feel are so powerful, cannot help them now, for by committing and limiting themselves to earthly love, they are rendered subject to the mutable forces which influence earthly affairs.

V. BOOK V

The narrative structure of Book V differs radically from that of the rest of the poem. Although it is the longest book of the five, Chaucer compresses one-third of the action into summary narrative, renders few dramatic scenes, and transposes chronological sequence in order to effect the awful swiftness of the catastasis. Much of the discourse is limited to monologues, soliloquies, and letters of Troilus and Criseyde; the preponderance of the dialogue is spoken by Diomede; most of the episodes are summarized, not dramatized.

The opening summary of the prisoner exchange proceeds in orderly fashion. It relates the essential stages necessary for the exchange and includes only details sufficient to reveal the feelings of Troilus,

Criseyde, and Diomede. The opening line foreshadows the importance of Diomede in Book V, for it mentions him before naming the two major characters, and the phrasing of the line "ful ready was at prime Diomede," further suggests his "prime" position in the remaining action, while denoting the hour of the day. The action progresses steadily as subsequent stanzas relate the feelings of Troilus, the feelings of Criseyde, and finally the departure of Criseyde with Diomede. Some details of the passage foreshadow the finality of this departure, for as Criseyde passes through the gates of Troy, one is reminded of the earlier mention of the gates of love and gates of heaven, all of which she leaves behind, and the statement, "and by the reyne hire hente . . . This Diomede, that ledde hire by the bridel," foreshadows the control that Diomede takes of Criseyde.

When the two parties separate, Chaucer chooses first to follow Diomede and Criseyde to the Greek camp rather than Troilus to Troy, which again focuses attention on the significance of Diomede in this book. Diomede's success in wooing Criseyde is also implied, for when they reach the Greek camp she "stood forth muwet, milde, and mansuete," not tearful, faint, or pained--she already appears resigned.

When Troilus returns to Troy, he rushes, as he always does at such times, to the security of his room,

and there:

> He corseth Jove, Apollo, and ek Cupide,
> He corseth Ceres, Bacus, and Cipride,
> His burthe, hymself, fate, and ek nature,
> And, save his lady, every creature.
>
> To bedde he goth, and walwith ther and torneth
> In furie, as doth he, Ixion, in helle.
> V, 207-212

Critics disagree on the reasons why Chaucer selects these particular gods for Troilus to curse,[10] but the progression of images and pattern of allusions already noted reveal a consistency in their use. The reasons for Troilus's cursing Jove, Cupid, and Venus (Cipride) grow out of their obvious influences on love. Ceres, goddess of earth, might be an appropriate target of Troilus's invective, but for Chaucer she also serves to allude again (the third time) to the myth of Persephone, who was forced to dwell in the underworld as Criseyde is forced to live in the Greek camp. Although Bacchus represents the uninhibited release of desire, and Troilus curses his own uncontrolled lust by condemning this god, the coupling of Bacchus with Apollo conjoins the antithetical Dionysian and Apollonian views of art, life, and, most appropriately, love. The juxtaposition of these two conceptions of love gives Chaucer an opportunity to infer again that the sensual, earthy, and secular

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[10] Root, Troilus and Criseyde, p. 534.

(Dionysian) passion of Troilus for Criseyde remains a limited and incomplete conception of love. Apollo is a fit object for Troilus's anger because of his astrological influences at this time. The sun (Apollo) resides in Leo, where Apollo exerts its most beneficial and strongest influences; Apollonian love (controlled, restrained, and perferably, spiritual) would be most beneficially influenced by the sun while it is in Leo, the astrological house which it rules. Troilus, however, having misdirected his approach to love, now suffers in despair.

Just as the mention of these particular gods is appropriate for Troilus and opportune for Chaucer, so is the allusion to Ixion. The image of the revolving wheel recalls the wheel of Goddess Fortuna, on which Troilus has been turning since the opening of the poem. These allusions, imposed by authorial intent, repeat correlative ideas, establish parallel situations, and generate patterns that unify Chaucer's theme.

Troilus's first dream in Book V is summarized in less detail than other dreams in the poem:

> And whan he fille in any slomberynges,
> Anon bygynne he sholde for to grone,
> And dremen of the dredfulleste thynges
> That myghte ben: as mete he were allone
> In place horrible, makyng ay his mone,
> Or meten that he was amonges alle
> His enemys, and in hire hondes falle.
>
> . . . . . .

> And seme as though he sholde falle depe
> From heighe olofte . . . .
> V, 246-259

Rather than presenting symbolic birds, animals, and objects, the dream depicts actions which themselves symbolize Troilus's situation, especially his imminent fall. The images of war and the condition of siege again express Troilus's situation in love and converge these thematic threads with which the poem deals.

Disorder of Troilus's world is evident not only in the ideality of dreams but also in various, sometimes subtle, disruptions in his daily life. The summary passage following Troilus's dream, for example, digresses to explain that Pandarus, who had promised to be with Troilus on this most woeful day, fails to appear until the day following Criseyde's departure. When, after spending four unhappy days at Sarpedon's palace, Troilus desires to leave, Pandarus (apparently enjoying himself) insists upon tarrying the week. This shows a surprising failure to understand Troilus's position and implies more concern for the feelings of Sarpedon than for those of the pining lover.

Disorder is also evident in the following 150 lines which summarize Troilus's erratic behavior while awaiting Criseyde's return. The structure of this passage, as erractic as Troilus's actions, arouses in the audience a sense of nervous frustration which approaches chaos:

> And to Criseydes hous they gonnen wende.
> V, 528
>
> Withouten word, he forthby gan to pace;
> And, as god wolde, he gan so faste ride,
> That no wight of his contenaunce espide.
> V, 537-539
>
> Fro thennesforth he rideth up and down . . . .
> V, 561
>
> And after this he to the yates wente.
> V, 603
>
> Upon the walles faste ek wolde he walke.
> V, 666
>
> This longe tyme he dryveth forth fight thus,
> Til fully passed was the nynthe nyght.
> V, 680-681

As Troilus gallops to Criseyde's house, wanders about Troy, and paces before the gates, the summary narrative is broken by fragments of his outbursts to himself, to the gods, to the buildings and gates.

In contrast, the more controlled presentation of Criseyde's lament confines the expression of her grief to tears and two long soliloquies rather than to erratic movement or action. At the end of a long discourse, the narrator summarizes:

> But, god it wot, or fully monthes two,
> She was ful fer fro that entencioun;
> For bothe Troilus and Troie town
> Shal knotteles thorughout hire herte slide;
> For she wol take a purpos for tabyde.
> V, 766-770

The mention of the following two months violates the close chronological sequence Chaucer has maintained throughout

the poem. The narrative time, according to all indications, remains the ninth day after her departure, and Chaucer continues that chronology when the action returns to Troy. There seems little justification for mentioning these two months unless Chaucer intends to indicate how long Diomede woos before she submits to him, for this passage immediately precedes the beginning of Diomede's suit. Chaucer's comment (V, 1086-1088), however, would contradict such a suggestion.[11] On the other hand, the pronoun "that" in line 767 refers to the last line of her speech, "To Troie I wol, as for conclusioun." Since we know that she intended to return to Troy in ten days, Chaucer stresses that she did not return for at least two months. But this could occur, according to all available evidence, only after the fall of the city. Yet Chaucer mentions this nowhere else; indeed, he professes his ignorance of the time lapse. Perhaps most fruitful is the possibility that Chaucer is again alluding to the astrological situation. The passage of the sun through the next zodiacal house (Virgo) brings about the fall of Venus, while the following house (Libra) witnesses the detriment of Mars; the fall of Venus (Criseyde, Love) ironically follows the detriment

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[11] Root, Troilus and Criseyde, p. 549, cites Benoit for support of his statement that the lapse is two years.

of Mars (Troilus, Troy, war) under the sign of the scales of justice. Chaucer again connects Troilus with Troy ("For bothe Troilus and Troie town/Shal knotteles thorughout her herte slide:"), repeats his thematic patterns, and anticipates his closing didactic statements.

Although the next stage of the story, Diomede's wooing of Criseyde, contains long passages of dialogue, the narrative structure and disjointed chronology again reflect the atypical qualities of this fifth book. Diomede emerges as the major figure of the passage; Chaucer, in fact, stresses his prominence by repeating the phrase "this Diomede" nine times.[12] While presenting Diomede's plan to "Into his net Criseydes herte brynge" (V, 775),[13] Chaucer interrupts the narrative to present his famous portraits of Diomede, Criseyde, and Troilus, after which he explicitly identifies the time:

> It fil that after, on the tenthe day
> Syn that Criseyde out of the citee yede,
> This Diomede, as fressh as braunche in May
> Com to the tente ther as Calkas lay
> And feyned hym with Calkas han to doone.
> V, 842-846

The irony of Diomede's suit beginning on the day of

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[12] Cf. lines 771, 779, 884, 869, 1010, 1024, 1031, 1041, 1087.

[13] Ironically, Diomede plans to catch Criseyde in his net, echoing the net in which Troilus earlier became entangled.

Criseyde's promised return is compounded by the simile of the third line which mentions the month in which Troilus's suit began. This precise dating also contributes to the emotional tension of the following conversation. The audience, as well as Criseyde, knows Troilus awaits her return, yet she amiably and calmly converses with a suitor. The image of Troilus's pacing, writhing, and suffering haunts the presentation of this courtship, otherwise characterized by decorum and etiquette. Chaucer even becomes playful as he relates Diomede's coquettish behavior:

> And with that word he gan to waxen red,
> And in his speche a litel wight he quook,
> And caste asyde a litel wight his hed,
> And stynte a while; and afterward he wook,
> And sobreliche on hire he threw his look,
> And seyde . . . .
>
> V, 925-930

Each gesture connected by and-anaphora adds a lightness to the scene which again contrasts with the earlier images of a frustrated and nervous Troilus.

Criseyde's reply to Deiomede's suit achieves its ironic effect from its contents as well as from its narrative context. Chaucer states, while introducing her reply, that she invites Diomede to return the next day:

> And thus she to hym seyde as ye may here,
>
> As she that hadde hire herte on Troilus
> So faste, that ther may it non arace;
> And straungely she spak, and seyde thus . . . .
>
> V, 952-955

Her speech is "straungely" spoken because she replies on

the day of her promised meeting with Troilus, yet she invites Diomede's return. The reply itself is strange because she lies about her feelings, encourages Diomede, and portends her loss to Troilus and the fall of Troy. Criseyde states that she may relent if Troy should fall, undoubtedly knowing that Troy cannot fall while possessing the Palladium. Twice in this speech (V, 977 and V, 999) she swears by Pallas, and as one recalls Troilus's first sight of Criseyde at the temple and remembers that Diomede steals the Palladium, the fusion of the fates of Troy and Troilus become symbolically linked with the analogous losses of Criseyde and Pallas.

Chaucer further indicates the submission of Criseyde to Diomede in the summary stanza following her reply:

> But in effect, and shortly for to seye,
> This Diomede al fresshly newe ayeyn
> Gan presen on, and faste hire mercy preye;
> And after this, the sothe for to seyn,
> Hire glove he took, of which he was ful fayn.
> And finaly, whan it was woxen eve,
> And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.
> V, 1009-1015

Certainly all was well with Diomede, for the giving of the glove, regardless of what degree of intimacy it may imply, signifies, in medieval protocol, the disarming of oneself. Juxtaposed with the following stanza, which describes the setting sun and falling Venus, this disarming of Criseyde symbolically reveals her turning from Troilus to Diomede--

on the day of her promised return.

The final summary stanzas of this passage speedily compress Diomede's success:

> Retornyng in hire soule ay up and down
> The wordes of this sodeyn Diomede,
> His grete estat, and peril of the town,
> And that she was allone and hadde nede
> Of frendes help. And thus bygan to brede
> The cause whi, the sothe for to telle,
> That she took fully purpos for to dwelle.
>
> The morwen com, and, gostly for to speke,
> This Diomede is come unto Criseyde;
> And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
> So wel he for hym selven spak and seyde,
> That alle hire sikes soore adown he leyde.
> And finaly, the sothe for to sende,
> He refte hire of the grete of al hire peyne.
>
> And after this the storie telleth us,
> That she hym yaf the faire baye stede,
> The which he ones wan of Troilus;
> And ek a broche, and that was litel nede,
> That Troilus was, she yaf this Diomede.
> And ek the bet from sorwe hym to releve,
> She made hym were a pencel of hire sleve.
> V, 1023-1043

The brevity with which Chaucer condenses this action, and his many asides, indicate that the climactic turning of Criseyde's unfaithfulness already has occurred. He stresses the effect that Diomede's words have upon her--an effect which Troilus (with words) seldom achieved. Yet Chaucer's narrative technique obscures valid comparison between the two suitors. He dramatizes Troilus's affair but only summarizes Diomede's in order to suggest that Criseyde's inevitable perfidy results more from the mutable nature of secular love than from the persuasive suit of the Greek

lover.

This passage again violates the chronology of the poem by its mention of incidents that occur months, perhaps even years, later. It would appear that instead of following close chronological order, Chaucer prefers to bring separate episodes to their conclusions; Diomede, for example, having strutted upon the stage, never returns to the poem. In contrast to the leisurely scenic effect of earlier books, with their felicitous weaving of various narrative effects, Book V generates its tension through a preponderance of summary narrative which compresses blocks of action and increases the pace.

Having concluded Diomede's role in the poem, Chaucer returns the action to Troy, where Troilus, on the tenth day after Criseyde's departure, waits in vain for her:

> And Nysus doughter song with fressh entente,
> Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente;
> And on the walles of the town they pleyde,
> To loke if they kan sen aught of Criseyde.
> V, 1110-1113

The allusion to Scylla suggests numerous associations with Troilus's situation beyond whatever symbolism her transformation into a lark may hold. For the love of an enemy (Minos, the judge of souls) who had besieged her city, Scylla committed an act of treachery seldom equaled in classical mythology. Although Criseyde does not herself bring about the fall of her city, her association with

Pallas, her submission to Diomede (who steals the protective statue), and the conjoining of Troilus with Troy contribute to the similarities between the two stories. Scylla, the lark, sings to Troilus with "fressh entente" perhaps telling him of treachery, for this is the day of Diomede's successful suit. Chaucer's phraseology, chosen to reinforce his pattern of allusions, repeats his use of summary passages to echo in the authorial voice his control and unity of theme.

Instead of culminating the suspenseful vigil with a dramatic episode, Chaucer sustains the tension yet another day through Troilus's rationalization ("thoughts he misacounted hadde his day") of Criseyde's failure to return.. The artistry with which Chaucer manages this climax is further enchanced by his withholding detailed presentation of the following days:

> The thridde, ferthe, fifte, sixte day
> After tho dayes ten of which I tolde,
> Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
> Yit somwhat trustyng on hire hestes olde.
> But whan he saugh she nolde hire terme holde,
> He kan now sen non other remedie,
> But for to shape hym soone for to dye.
> V, 1205-1211

Chaucer has shown Troilus's behavior in the first days of waiting and has dramatized Troilus's feeling. Now he subdues this climax with summary narrative, for detailed description, dramatic rendition, or poignant commentary

would either destroy the artistic tension or transform Troilus's pathetic vigil into a ludicrous and sentimental parody. Chaucer's artistry of technique, as shown in this passage, reveals the consciousness with which he manipulates his narrative structure.

The final evidence which convinces Troilus of Criseyde's unfaithfulness comes in a dream:

> So on a day he leide hym down to slepe,
> And so byfel that in his elepe hym thoughte,
> That in a forest faste he welk to wepe
> For love of hire that hym this peyne wroughte;
> And up and down as he the forest soughte,
> He mette he say a boor with tuskes grete,
> That slep ayein the bryghte sonnes heete;
>
> And by this boor, faste in hire armes folde,
> Lay, kissynge ay, his lady bright, Criseyde.
> V, 1233-1241

Although Troilus learns that the boar represents Diomede (V, 1456), for the present it symbolizes only the licentiousness of Criseyde, whom Troilus now condemns. Troilus never considers, nor does the dream suggest with its passive boar and aggressive lady, Criseyde's <u>unwilling</u> submission. The boar, having no zodiacal nor celestial associations, depicts a thoroughly earthly and physical representation. Since Troilus has known Criseyde in carnal love, he now assumes her perfidy. As idealistic as Troilus's love for Criseyde may have appeared, its lack of spiritual reality leaves him divested of love and broken of faith.

When Troilus seeks Cassandra's interpretation of his dream, she relates several incidents, but most of her long story of Thebes the narrator summarizes. The information most relevant to Troilus' dream is dramatically presented, and through Cassandra's foreknowledge, he learns of Diomede's success with his beloved. The summary of the siege of Thebes, however, is in the narrator's voice and balances with Criseyde's reading of the same piece in Book II. It serves as a representative parallel foreshadowing the fall of Troy. The image of the siege permeates Chaucer's summary passages: love's siege of Troilus's heart, the siege of Troy, the siege of Thebes, the siege of Megara, and the siege of man by the orbiting planets, by the gods, by Fortune. It is Chaucer's central unifying image and further indicates the omnipotence of God and the nature of love.

Having identified Troilus's position on the turning wheel of Fortune, Chaucer now turns his attention to the fate of Troy. A poignant two-stanza summary relates the death of Hector, and even though Troilus is second only to Hector, the iminence of his death is obvious. The narrator relates Troilus's rising hopes as he rationalizes reasons why Criseyde does not return, thus sustaining the tension, but the final evidence appears in the form of Deiphobus's trophy--Diomede's jacket:

> . . . but as he gan byholde,
> Ful sodeynly his herte gan to colde,
>
> As he that on the coler fond withinne
> A broche, that he Criseyde yaf that morwe
> That she from troie moste nedes twynne,
> In remembraunce of hym and of his sorwe;
> And she hym leyde ayeyn hire feith to borwe
> To kepe it ay; but now ful wel he wiste,
> His lady nas no lenger onto triste.
> V, 1658-1666

Chaucer omits mention of the brooch at the time of Criseyde's departure, and he fails to describe it in this passage. Such omissions appear as weaknesses when one considers the significance of the brooch to the plot. The reference revives the image of Criseyde's departure from Troy and strengthens the emotional portrayal of Troilus's state of mind. The flashback dramatizes Troilus's reaction to the discovery by extending the same process to the audience. This disruption in the narrative furthers the general disjointed collapse of Troilus's world and provides another instance of Chaucer's skill as a narrative plot.

Troilus's certainty of Criseyde's perfidy is related in the final summary passage of Book V.[14] His "double sorwe" is complete and the cycle of Fortune's wheel has been brought full turn. He now knows the

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[14] The remaining summary passage in the poem will be considered with the commentary which together make up the conclusion of the poem and comprise the subject of the last chapter of this study.

transitory nature of earthly joy and the mutability of secular love. Troilus has discovered what Chaucer has known and his attentive audience has suspected through the poet's consistent patterns of imagery and allusion which have insistently pointed toward this conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

COMMENTARY

The "I" of commentary passages belongs to a narrator whose voice may be considered Chaucer's dramatic conception of his performing self. Chaucer is certainly the author of this poem, and he quite possibly narrated it before courtly audiences. Chaucer has endowed the narrator of Troilus and Criseyde with characteristics and attitudes which, when orally narrating the poem, he would himself acquire. Constantly, the poet's thematic design determines the dramatic poses the narrator assumes. This relationship is not always easy to decipher, for it is complicated by his rhetorical relationship to the audience and his aesthetic relationship to the story. As an artist Chaucer is aware that the didactic purpose of the poet is more effectively transmitted not by a pedantic sermon but by an exemplary parallel. In Troilus and Criseyde he reinforces this common medieval technique by further demonstrating his theme through the dramatized experience of the narrator. The enlightening lesson learned by the Trojan lover through his experience in erotic love, then, is made applicable to Chaucer's medieval audience by a contemporary narrator who dramatically discovers Christian truth through relating the pagan tale.

The performance of the narrator presented in passages of commentary provides another parallel which unifies Chaucer's theme. The cosmic drama presented in passages of description and the historic and legendary parallel of Troy presented in passages of summary are further complemented by the dramatic development of the narrator's commentary passages. The implied author is most evident, therefore, in these commentary passages. No necessary dramatic or narrative functions require the "I" of the poem to speak: his commentaries are always gratuitous. But Chaucer does achieve certain aesthetic and thematic effects through conscious control of first person commentaries.

I. BOOK I

The proem of Book I, as might be expected, is longer than the proems of other books. Within the proem, groups of lines function variously: lines 1-5 introduce the plot, lines 6-11 invoke Tisiphone, lines 12-18 tell why Chaucer invokes her, lines 19-51 are addressed to lovers who "bathen in gladnesse," line 52 requests the audience to listen attentively, and lines 53-56 close the proem by repeating the plot.

The introduction of the plot concisely identifies the main character, establishes the setting, and outlines the course of action:

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,

> That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
> In lovynge how his adventures fellen
> From wo to wele, and after out of joie,
> My purpose is, or that I parte fro ye.
> I, 1-5

The announcement of a purpose indicates that the broad category into which the poem falls is exemplum. Beyond whatever historic or aesthetic purpose Chaucer fulfills by the poem, the didactic intent implicit in exempla is ever present. And although the didacticism is not overt until the epilogue, it pervasively manifests itself through the control, emphasis, and unity implicit in passages of commentary.

Kemp Malone perceptively notes that the poem presents not two sorrows but two periods of sorrow: "Fro wo to wele, and after out of joie."[1] Both periods of sorrow, as well as the period of joy, are brought about by the machinations of Love. Chaucer succeeds in showing the despair of one in love and the despair of one out of love--paradixically, man appears to suffer in either case. Stricken by love, Troilus despairs; elevated by love, he attains joy only to be plunged into deeper despair upon losing his earthly beloved. Only after he directs his love toward a spiritual conception is he transported to celestial heights. Such an outline exhibits the unity of the major

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[1] Kemp Malone, Chapters on Chaucer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1951), p. 105.

subject--the history of Troilus's love--and the two periods of sorrow contribute to that same unity of theme.

The narrator's invocation of Tisiphone, rather than of the Muses or even of Venus herself, furthers this attitude toward love. Although Tisiphone, the avenging sister of the Erinyes, must bring suffering to others, she herself suffers, doing what she must. The narrator sees himself in a similar situation:

> Thesiphone, thow help me for tendite
> Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write.
>
> To the clepe I, thow goddesse of torment,
> Thow cruel furie sorwynge evere yn peyne,
> Help me that am the sorwful intrument
> That helpeth loveres, as I kan, to pleyne.
> I, 6-11

Tisiphone, then, because her situation is similar to the narrator's, is an appropriate figure to call upon, for she would be more sympathetic to him. These apostrophes to Tisiphone also help to demonstrate relationship between the poet and narrator. The request, "help me for tendite/ Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write," is one that only an author could make. Yet the earlier statement, "My purpose is, er that I parte fro ye," suggest a speaking narrator. Only a poet conceived as a performing narrator could make both statements in the same first person "I," and the later helplessness of the narrator is all the more effective because of this relationship.

In the following lines, the narrator explains that he invokes Tisiphone because she is an appropriate mate for such a "woful wight" as himself; he dare not love because of his "unliklynesse," and he has no hope of help from the goddess of love:

> For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
> A woful wight to han a drery feere,
> And to a sorwful tale a sory chere.
>
> For I, that god of loves servauntes serve,
> Ne dar to love, for myn unliklynesse,
> Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfor sterve,
> So fer em I from his help in darknesse.
> I, 12-18

These characteristics present a narrator whose own apparent failure and hopelessness in love characterize his poem. One can well imagine how this description would delight listeners who could physically observe the speaker, especially if they were sufficiently acquainted with the man to know of his success--or failure-- in love. The irony of the narrator's relationship to the god of love, however, imbues the passage with religious overtones. The statement of line fifteen, "For I, that god of loves servauntes serve," removes the narrator from his relationship to love and identifies his intended service for the audience, but the god referred to is ambiguous. The god of those in his audience that serve love can be either the God of Christianity (Deus) or the deity of courtly love (Cupid). Courtly love remains the only constant religious system

within both the story of Troilus and the experience of the audience. Troilus's attempt to commingle courtly love with his paganism fails, and Chaucer implies by this conscious ambiguity that the same failure results in a Christian context. Therefore, the narrator continues, "if this may don gladnesse/Unto any lovere, and his cause availle,/Have he my thonk, and myn be this travaille,".

The following stanzas (4-7) present a series of petitions to lovers "that bathen in gladnesse." After asking in the first stanza that they remember their own past "hevynesse" and the adversity of others, he asks that they pray:

> And preieth for hem that ben in the cas
> Of Troilus, as ye may after here,
> That love hem brynge in hevene to solas;
> And ek for me preieth to god so dere,
> That I have myght to shewe in som manere
> Swich peyne and so as loves fold endure,
> In Troilus unsely adventure.
>
> And biddeth ek for hem that ben despeired
> In love, that nevere nyl recovered be,
> And ek for hem that falsly ben apeired
> Thorugh wikked tonges, be it he or she;
> Thus biddeth god, for his benignite,
> So graunte hem soone out of this world to pace,
> That be despeired out of loves grace.
>
> And biddeth ek for hem that ben at ese,
> That god hem graunte ay good perseveraunce,
> And sende hem myght hire ladies so to plese,
> That it to love be worship and pesaunce;
> For so hope I my soule best avaunce,
> To preye for hem that loves servauntes be,
> And write hire wo, and lyve in charite.
> I, 29-49

Root notes that this address is in the form of a bidding

prayer, like that used by priests to request their congregation to pray for various categories of persons.[2] The technique used here suggests a fusion of Christian and pagan elements suggested in much of the commentary, and again the God referred to is ambiguous. Moreover, Ruth Crosby, in her provocative study of oral delivery, alludes to this passage as evidence in support of her claim that Chaucer intended this poem to be read aloud before an audience, and, indeed, that he probably did so himself.[3]

In this bidding prayer, Chaucer arranges three groups of categories in three sequential stanzas. In the first, he asks the audience to pray for those who have been in the position of Troilus and for himself. In the second stanza he asks them to pray for those who will never recover from love, those who have been slandered, and those who are out of love's grace. The last stanza asks them to pray for those who are at ease in love. These groupings significantly reveal Chaucer's attitude and theme concerning love. Like Troilus, those who have experienced love and learned its limitations have found comfort beyond

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[2]Root, Troilus and Criseyde, p. 410.

[3]Ruth Crosby, "Chaucer and the Custom of Oral Delivery," Speculum XIII (1938), 429.

earthly love--they are consoled by spiritual love.

The terminology with which the narrator identifies various relationships with love projects his conception of secular love as a transcendent experience leading to divine love: lovers must ever "pleyne," but "love hem brynge in hevene to solace." Those who have experienced love as Troilus have known its joys and woes, but Chaucer comforts them by suggesting that a greater joy and a lasting solace awaits them after death. Therefore, he continues, pray for those who have not experienced the grace of love "so graune hem soone out of this world to pace." Finally, his appeal for those at ease in love--that they be granted perseverance and that they be sent ladies to worship--ambiguously suggests that they who have not suffered in love are the most pitiful of all, for they cannot transcend secular love until they discover its ephemeral and mutable nature.

The narrator ends this prayer of supplication by saying that he can contribute best to his own soul and live in charity by praying for those who are love's servants' he has compassion for them as if they were his own brothers. He displays charity and compassion because he has gone through the experience himself. His poem, then, serves lovers as an example and an instruction in the ways of love.

The narrator completes his announcements, invocations,

and bidding, and calls the audience to attention by repeating the statements of the opening stanza:

> Now harkneth with a good entencioun;
> For now wol I gon streyght to my matere,
> In which ye may the double sorwes here
> Of Troilus in lovynge of Criseyde,
> And how that she forsook hym or she deyde.
> I, 52-56

This elliptical technique rounds out the proem, which has helped establish the tone, subject, point of view, and theme of the poem.

Within each of the five books the commentaries lose the formal requirements of proems. The voice of the narrator operates on at least two levels. Firstly, he intermittently expresses contemporary courtly attitudes on the themes of love and fortune. Secondly, he devotes much of his commentary towards maintaining a rhetorical relationship with his audience. These passages, by their progressive development, however, present a change in the narrator's pose which dramatizes the same discovery that Troilus makes in the story proper and the audience can glean by witnessing the gradual expansion of the narrator's awareness.

The longest commentary in Book I expands the narrator's initial conceptions of love. When Troilus arrives at the temple of the Palladium with his friends, he makes a speech in which he scorns love and lovers:

O veray fooles! nyce and blynde be ye;
Ther nys nat oon kan war by other be.
I, 202-203

The narrator echoes this statement in his discursive commentary beginning, "O blynde world, O blynde entencioun!" Though Troilus calls lovers blind, the narrator states that Troilus and, indeed, all in this transitory world (including, of course, his listening audience), ignorant of what fate has in store for them, are blind. Ironically, he criticizes Troilus for voicing sentiments which the narrator, in the closing stanzas, expresses to his audience--lovers <u>are</u> blind. The enlightenment Troilus discovers through his own experience, then, is no more extreme and no less dramatic than that eventually realized by the narrator.

The narrator then presents an analogy between Troilus and the behavior of a horse:

As proude Bayard gynneth for to skippe
Out of the wey, so pryketh hym his corn,
Til he a lassh have of the longe whippe,
Than thynketh he, "though I praunce al byforn,
First in the trays, ful fat, and newe shorn,
Yit am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my feres drawe."

So ferde it by this fierse and proude knyght;
Though he a worthy kynges sone were,
And wende no thing hadde had swich myght,
Ayeyns his wil, that sholde his herte stere,
Yit with a look his herte was a-fere,
That he, that now was moost in pride above,
Wax sodeynly moost subgit unto love.
I, 218-231

Everything acts true to its own nature. A horse must behave as a horse; Troilus must conform to the nature of man. Just as the horse is helpless to deny the control of its driver, and just as the narrator is helpless to control the outcome of his tale, so is Troilus helpless to control the force of love. The attitude suggests man's impotence, for though the narrator intends to tell lovers of the woe and the joy of love, he clearly asserts that in its power man is helpless.

The narrator exemplifies the "lawe of kynde"--the idea that man cannot deny the power of love:

> Forthy, ensample taketh of this man,
> Ye wise, proude, and worthi folkes alle,
> To scornen love, which that so sone kan
> The fredom of youre hertes to hym thralle;
> For evere it was, and evere it shal byfalle,
> That love is he that alle thing may bynde;
> For may no man fordo the lawe of kynde.
> I, 232-238

The narrator here makes explicit the didactic intent of his story. Troilus serves as an example for an audience which, though Christian, is not so very different from the pagan lover. With the prioress of the Canterbury Tales, the narrator believes that Amor vincit omnia, and like his audience, the narrator appears to be a devotee of courtly love. He asserts that love "alle thing may bynde," and that this truth applies to Troilus as well as his audience, as they will soon learn: "This was, and is, and yit men shal it see." But the ambiguity of amor

(divine or earthly) persists, and the narrator does not yet distinguish between these two conceptions of love.

Because man is helpless, the narrator's argument continues, and because love binds all things together, those who have suffered most from love have also been most comforted by it. Again he presents a concept of love already announced in the proem and embodied in the tale of Troilus: though love brings woe, it also brings joy, and, perhaps, if the woe of love doubles, so will its joy. The narrator concludes in the next stanza that one should follow love and not try to refuse it, even though, paradoxically, he has no power to refuse it:

> Now sith it may nat goodly ben withstonde.
> And is a thing so vertuous in kynde,
> Refuseth nat to love for to be bonde;
> Syn as hym selven list he may yow bynde.
> The yerde is bet that bowen wole and wynde
> Than that that brest; and therfor I yow rede
> To folwen love that yow so wel kan lede.
> I, 253-259

The last stanza of this commentary passage serves as a transition:

> But for to tellen forth in special
> As of this kynges sone, of which I tolde,
> And leten other thing collateral,
> Of hym thenke I my tale forth to holde,
> Bothe of his joie, and of his cares colde;
> And al his werk as touching this matere,
> For I it gan, I wol therto refere.
> I, 260-266

Although the narrator has digressed he repeats that all else should be subordinate to his intention. Such

repetition assures one that Chaucer consciously controlls the narrator and knows where his tale will lead him: he must present both the joy and woe of Troilus. Intention emerges from both proem and commentary, for the antithetical extremes of joy and woe comprise a single conception of love. It has been previously noted (Cf. Chapter II) that though Chaucer's portrayals of Criseyde and Troilus present differing embodiments of love, the overall conception develops a single and unifying principle. Following this commentary, Troilus enters the gates of the temple, where the very irony of his relationship to the "lawe of kynde" is enacted as he becomes a helpless victim of love. Chaucer demonstrates his careful manipulation of narrative techniques through his placing this long, essential commentary prior to the first scene which dramatizes its ideas.

To emphasize the didactic nature of his intention, the narrator varies his rhetoric with proverbial commentaries in this passage on love. "For kaught is proud, and kaught is debonnaire" paraphrases "pride will have its fall." "But al day faileth thing that fooles wenden" is reminiscent of the Scottish proverb, "All fails that fools think."[4] "The yerde is bet that bowen wole and wynde/Than

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[4]Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 815.

that that brest" is similar to the Aesopian fable of the oak and the reed. The narrator's use of proverbs sustains the colloquial tone that he has established with his audience: he has addressed them with informal asides and has employed the conventional diction and homespun epigrams that generate familiarity. His use of exempla, sententia, and circumlocutio sustains this colloquial tone and intimate pose of a pleasing story-teller and skillful narrator.

One may notice that in this commentary the language becomes far more figurative than elsewhere. Such figuration may offer some clue to identifying those passages Chaucer wished to stress: he goes to great lengths to be certain that his audience understands his meaning. Significantly, this passage contains the greatest number of lines in Book I which are original with Chaucer. Whereas other sections of Book I show the obvious influence of Boccaccio, Benoit, or others, this section, apart from commonplace conventions, is relatively free of influences. Moreover, this section also contains the greatest number of consecutive lines in Book I with no revisions whatsoever.[5] That these commentaries are gratuitous, original

[5] Forty-seven lines, 229-257.

with Chaucer, and lacking in revision, indicates the consciousness with which Chaucer controls the narrator's commentaries.

At line 308 the narrator speaks the shortest commentary in Book I, "Blissed be love, that kan thus folk converte!" There is little justification for this short commentary from the viewpoint of narrative development. Chaucer has already managed to show the transformation in Troilus: he has changed from scorn to regret, from regret to worship of Love. Surely Chaucer cannot feel that he must make explicit, merely for the sake of repetition, a change which he has already shown dramatically. On the other hand it may be that he intends not so much to repeat what he has dramatically shown as to emphasize what is thematically significant. Troilus's conception of love is as important as his changing attitudes toward it. His mutability is significant. Since the beginning of the poem, Chaucer has indicated that the power of love to work change is the quality which concerns him. Throughout he presents numerous examples of change: the change of Troilus's attitude toward love, the change in the success of Pandarus's love affair, the change in the weather forcing Criseyde to change her plans, the change in her relationship with Troilus, the change of their fortune from woe to joy and to woe again, the many transformations of mythical personages,

the ever-changing planets, the exchange of prisoners, and finally, of course, the most important change of Criseyde's fidelity at the end. Only after death does Troilus find stability--placed among the fixed stars. Fortune, whose mutable wheel changes men's lives, haunts the poem, and the narrator frequently praises love for her ability to evoke change. Against the context of these changes, the narrator analyzes Troilus's transformation from cynic to idolater to commiserator.

But the audience observes another change. Thus far the narrator has maintained an informal pose in regard to his audience and an objective, somewhat aloof, relationship to Troilus and Criseyde: he has announced his purpose, narrowed his topic, and stated a moral. These poses, however, also serve to establish a rhetorical and aesthetic position from which the narrator dramatically turns as he becomes intimately involved with the lovers and acutely aware of his story's significance.

The conversational tone of Book I continues in a subsequent commentary:

> For ay the ner the fir, the hotter is,--
> This, trowe I, knoweth al this compaingnye.
> I, 450

The proverb, though appropriate, breaks the tone of the summary which it interrupts and replaces it with a colloquial familiarity that establishes an informal tone

with the audience and brings the audience into an intimate relationship with the speaker.

The narrator uses occupatio in his commentaries to establish an aesthetic distance which balances the emotional intimacy he later expresses. After reporting that Troilus may have had a fever, the narrator remarks, "But how it was, certeyn, I kan nat seye" (492). The narrator maintains his role as oral performer, for certainly, if he were speaking as a poet, he could say whether Troilus had a fever or not. Chaucer contrives this apparent ignorance, it would seem, to establish a realism of presentation which places the poem in a context and the audience in a relationship that helps him achieve his didactic purpose through the narrator's dramatic involvement.

Commentary does not appear again until the closing stanza. Once Pandarus and Troilus meet to discuss and plan their strategy, Chaucer avoids any interruption; he reserves commentary for specific purposes and avoids it when other narrative techniques may better achieve his ends. Nevertheless the closing commentary of Book I returns to his earlier figurative, conversational style:

> Now lat us stynte of Troilus a stounde,
> That fareth lik a man that hurt is soore,
> And is som deel of akyng of his wownde
> Ylissed wel, butheeled no deel moore,
> And, as an esy pacyent, the loore
> Abit of hym that gooth aboute his cure;
> And thus he dryeth forth his aventure.
>
> I, 1086-1092

Stated as a commentary, this passage includes a cogent summary of Troilus's psychological state and serves as a transition between books. The simile also links the books together, for Pandarus opens Book II not unlike a medieval doctor, consulting astrological tables and concocting necessary remedies. But the narrator maintains his detached pose and informal tone when he says, "Now lat us stynte of Troilus a stounde."[6] The inclusiveness of the plural pronoun and the temporal limitations of the last word give further indication of an intended oral presentation and strengthen the rhetorical and aesthetic position of the narrator's present pose.

II. Book II

Although the proem of Book II is only slightly shorter than that of Book I, it utilizes some of the same techniques. Book I shows Troilus in despair and concludes with hope of his recovery; Book II opens with a metaphoric figure addressed to the wind which will clear the weather. The unity of such cosmic elements should be noted, for as the poem moves from the showers of April to the warmth of May, Troilus's situation improves.

The narrator then invokes the muse of history because

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[6]Italics mine.

he intends only to translate the poem:

> O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
> Thow be my speed fro this forth, and my Muse,
> To ryme wel this book, til I have do;
> Me nedeth here noon othere art to use.
> Forwhi to every lovere I me excuse,
> That of no sentement I this endite,
> But out of Latyn in my tonge it write.
> II, 8-14

On the one hand Clio is an appropriate muse to invoke for this book since most of the action involves Pandarus's intervention on Troilus's behalf. The narrator intends only to report action. He poses as an historian by invoking the muse of history in order to reaffirm his detachment from the story and his service to the audience. On the other hand Chaucer knows that the narrator's assertion (that he is involved only in translating his sources) is simply untrue. In no other book of the poem does Chaucer rely less on his source, Il Filostrato, than in Book II. Of the 1757 lines of Book II, only 349 can be traced to Boccaccio's poem; moreover, Chaucer invents entire scenes: Antigone's song in the garden, Criseyde's dream, and the episode at Deiphibus's house.

Such an invocation is appropriate for Chaucer's aesthetic purpose and the narrator's ironic pose. Having shown his compassion for the audience in the opening poem, the narrator renounces responsibility and attains perspective by asserting his position as historian with this second invocation.

The narrator further shows his ironic ambivalence in the third stanza wherein he asserts that he cannot be blamed for that which happens, since he is only translating:

> Wherefore I nyl have neither thank ne blame
> Of al this werk, but prey yow mekely,
> Disblameth me, if any word be lame;
> For as myn auctour seyde, so sey I.
> Ek though I speeke of love unfelyngly,
> No wonder is, for it no thyng of newe is;
> A blynd man kan nat juggen wel in hewis.
> II, 15-21

But though the narrator cannot change the outcome of the history of the story, Chaucer is responsible as poet. Chaucer wishes his audience to believe that the narrator is an objective, impotent reporter of the story, but every time he uses commentary he shows his partiality and reveals his control of the story. Therefore, one must consider with some reservation the narrator's statements, "I speck of love unfelyngly," and "A blynd man kannat juggen wel in hewis." Since he has already stated falsely that he is only translating and that he is not responsible for the story, one may assume that here too he is dissembling. In the proem of the first book, the narrator tries to convince the audience that he had been unlucky in love and that he could not serve the goddess of love but only those who serve her. Here he assumes the same pose. His poem, he claims, is founded on authority,

not experience; yet he attributes much of what he says to spurious authority and assumes extensive experience. The irony of this situation enhances rather than detracts from his purpose. Here is a narrator who professes to know nothing of love telling an audience which (if one can assume the universality of the courtly tradition) professes to know a great deal about love, a story that attempts to portray the truth of earthly and divine love. By making obvious his <u>own</u> ironical relationship to love, the narrator exemplifies the irony of love, whether it be in himself, his audience, or his poem.

The following stanzas of the poem imply another ambiguity. Although the narrator states that the customs and speech of love have changed over the previous thousand years, he continues to show that the behavior of lovers has really not changed at all. He stresses this by frequent comparisons involving his present audience:

> . . . and yit thei spake hem so,
> And speede as wel in love as men now do;
> II, 25-26

> And forthi, if it happe in any wyse,
> That here be any lovere in this place
> That herkneth, as the story wol devise,
> How Troilus com to his lady grace,
> And thenketh, "so nolde I nat love purchace,"
> Or wondreth on his speche, or his doynge,
> I noot, but it is me no wonderynge.
> II, 29-35

> If that men ferde in love as men don here,
> II, 39

> Ek scarsly ben ther in this place thre,
> That have in love seid lik, and don in al.
> II, 43-44

Although language has changed over the past one thousand years, the narrator implies that attitudes toward secular love have remained the same. Moreover, Troilus epitomizes the courtly lover. Chaucer's audience understands what Troilus does and what he says, for as the narrator has suggested, they have done the same thing.

The intimate familiarity the narrator maintains with his audience also serves Chaucer's thematic purpose, and, again, would be strengthened even more during an oral presentation. The narrator's explicit and colloquial address to his audience implicates and involves them. He calls upon their experiences, their understanding, their patience and compassion. He stresses his objective and helpless relationship to the story but dramatically establishes a personal relationship with them, and repeatedly expresses his attempt to maintain these determined poses. As the story progresses, however, he slowly shifts these relationships until he becomes passionately and helplessly involved in the fate of Troilus and Criseyde. The performance of his own dramatic entanglement cannot help but induce his audience in a similar involvement.

Once Book II begins, no commentary interrupts the

the sequence of action until line 666. Here the narrator interrupts to comment upon Criseyde's reaction when she sees Troilus ride by. He anticipates the objection of those who may think she responds too suddenly:

> Now myghte som envious jangle thus:
> "This was a sodeyn love; how myghte it be
> That she so lightly loved Troilus
> Right for the firste syghte, ye parde?"
> II, 666-669

The narrator offers one proverbial explanation--all things must have beginnings--but this is obviously inadequate. In the next stanza he distinguishes quite carefully between her bestowal of love and her simple attraction to Troilus:

> For I sey nat that she so sodeyaly
> Yaf hym hire love, but that she gan enclyne
> To like hym first, and I have told yow whi;
> And after that, his manhod and his pyne
> Made love withinne hire for to myne;
> For which, proces and by good servyse,
> He gat hire love, and in no sodeyn wyse.
> II, 673-679

The narrator feels obliged, here, to explain Criseyde's behavior rather than to allow her actions to speak for themselves. In view of what occurs later, however, such explanations may seem unnecessary: she continues to argue with her uncle, she witholds her love from Troilus, and she is deceived into meeting him at Pandarus's house which, nevertheless, ends in the consummation. Criseyde's falling in love, then, is not a sudden nor rash act. The narrator's insistence, here, on her discretion is not intended to

justify her loving Troilus but rather to explain her betrayal of him. Just as "his manhod and his pyne" brought Criseyde to love Troilus, so "by proces and by good servyse" Diomede brings Criseyde to love him. Criseyde is susceptible to such suits, and the parallelism of the two cases is further suggested in the following stanza, (II, 680-686), which denotes the influence of Venus. The narrator indicates, however, a growing concern with the motives of his characters. His comment is not a particularly strong justification of Criseyde's reaction, but it does begin to reveal his increased involvement.

Much of the remaining commentary in Book II is devoted to such conventional rhetorical devices as occupatio and dubitatio.[7] The narrator frequently states that he wishes to speed the action along:

> What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?
> As ye han herd byfore, al he hym tolde.
> II, 965-966

> Of which to telle in short is myn entente
> Theffect, as fer as I kan understonde.
> II, 1219-1220

> What sholde I drecche, or telle of his aray?
> II, 1264

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[7] An excellent explanation of medieval rhetoric and an analysis of Chaucer's use of it has been presented by John Matthews Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," The Proceedings of the British Academy, XII (1926), 95-113.

What nedeth yow to tellen al the cheere
II, 1541

For al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle;
For, for o fyn is al that evere I telle.
II, 1594-1595

But fle we now prolixitee best is,
For love of god, and lat us faste go
Right to theffect, withouten tales mo.
II, 1564-1566

What sholde I lenger in this tale tarien?
II, 1622

The effect of these asides gives a sense of immediacy to the narrative, hurrying the audience over action which, though necessary, is not so relevant to Chaucer's purpose as action which will come later. The use of "sermon" and the last rhetorical question suggest his concern with didactic import rather than historical detail. Significantly, most of these comments occur in passages Chaucer himself has added, not in sections which he takes from his sources. In spite of these declarations, however, Chaucer does unfold many details as though the narrator were savoring and enjoying every line. The effect of these asides helps to maintain the relationships that the narrator has established with his audience and to the story, but his insistent rhetorical questions indicate a questioning of his own motive. Why should he delay? Why should he sermonize? Why <u>does</u> he tarry? These questions do not explain his skipping over details of the story but emphasize his realization that he is not advancing "right to theffect, withouten

tales mo." He knows, as historian, the "fyn" and "theffect" he intends to reach, but he does not "faste go" because he is becoming enmeshed in his story.

The closing commentary of Book II interrupts the scene at Deiphobus's house:

> But now to yow, ye loveres that ben here,
> Was Troilus nat in a kankedort?
> That lay, and myghte whisprynge of hem here,
> And thoughte: "O lord, right now renneth my sort
> Fully to deye, or han anon comfort";
> And was the firste tyme he shulde hire preye
> Of love; O myghty god, what shal he seye?
> II, 1751-1757

Since Book III, line 50, continues exactly where this book ends, one can suggest that this ending is but a pseudo-ending which interrupts rather than concludes the action of Book II. Why did Chaucer choose to end Book II at this point? Certainly, if he continued to the end of the dinner scene, Book II would be entirely too long, both in relation to the other books, and in relationship to a listening audience. If he had ended Book II at the beginning of the dinner scene, incorporating the entire scene into Book III, Book II would not in consequence have been abnormally short, but Book III would have become excessively long. Since he apparently felt forced to divide the dinner scene into two books, Chaucer selected the very point which adds to the suspense and unifies the books--the lovers' first confrontation. The book closes with a question that heightens

suspense to a degree that is seldom equaled in the rest of the poem and induces the audience into the kind of involvement which the narrator dramatically exhibits.

III. BOOK III

The proem of Book III differs from the proems of the previous books in both tone and structure. The pose of the narrator's relationship to his authorities and the naivete' of his experience in matters of love give way to a sincere reverence for the power and universality of love. The unity of love as well as the unifying function of Book III are implied in the first stanza of the proem:

> O blisful light, of which the bemes clere
> Adorneth al the thridde hevenne faire;
> O sones lief, O Joves doughter deere,
> Pleasaunce of love. O goodly debonaire,
> In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire;
> O verray cause of heele and of gladnesse,
> Iheryed be thy myght and thi goodnesse.
> III, 1-7

He addresses Venus as a planet, the sun's life, and Jove's daughter, before he addresses her as the goddess of love. He has merged the planet and the goddess just as, throughout the poem, Chaucer merges the power of love and the power of the planets as a single force influencing the lives of men. The repetition and rhythm of the apostrophe in this stanza elevate the tone and prepare for the prayer which is to come before the end of the proem.

The second stanza repeats and makes more explicit the

universality of love as well as its power to conjoin things:

> In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see,
> Is felt thi myght, if that I wel descerne;
> As man, brid, best, fisshe, herbe, and grene tree
> The fele in tymes with vapour eterne.
> God loveth, and to love wol nat werne;
> And in this world no lyves creature,
> Withouten love, is worth, or may endure.
> III, 8-14

The passage embodies the three realms of medieval cosmogony, implies the four elements of air, fire, earth, and water, and includes the chain of being from man to plants to suggest the unifying principle of love throughout--love joins all things in a holy and universal bond. This passage also implies the fusion of Christian and pagan elements in the poem, as well as earthly and divine love. Although the first stanza is addressed to Venus, the pagan goddess of earthly love, the second stanza alludes to the Christian God of divine love. As the poem exemplifies an extension and representation of these concepts of love, this book conjoins the two in the union of the idealistic Troilus and the realistic Criseyde.

The narrator makes explicit in the third stanza of the proem yet another aspect of the theme: that love brings both good fortune and bad:

> Ye Joves first to thilke effectes glade,
> Thorugh which that thynges lyven alle and be,
> Comeveden, and amoreux hem made
> On mortal thyng, and as yow list, ay ye
> Yeve hym in love ese or adversitee;

> And in a thousand formes down hym sente
> For love in erthe, and whom yow list, he hente.
> III, 15-21

The blending of the cult of Love and Christian theology is made even more explicit in the second line where Venus, like the Holy Ghost, generates the life-giving principle and impersonates the qualities of divine love. Earthly love informs man of the bond by which divine love orders the universe. Whereas the narrator's earlier explication of Love assumed only the secular experience of courtly love, it now embodies the additional implications of Christian divinity.

The unifying principle of Love is further implied in the unions Chaucer presents in this proem. He has conjoined the planet and the goddess, Venus; she is the power of Love, both in its sexual and Platonic aspects. Chaucer blends the Platonic doctrine of love with Christian theology, and the following stanzas fuse the astrological and mythological aspects with these philosophical and theological conceptions:

> Ye fiers Mars apaisen of his ire,
> And, as yow list, ye maken hertes digne;
> Algates hem that ye wol sette a-fire,
> They dreden shame, and vices they resigne;
> Ye don hem curteys be, fressh and benigne;
> And heighe or lowe, after a wight entendeth,
> The joies that he hath, youre myght it sendeth.
>
> Ye holden regne and hous in unitee;
> Ye sothfast cause of frendship ben also;

> Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee
> Of thynges, which that folk on wondren so,
> What they kan nought construe how it may jo,
> She loveth hym, or whi he loveth here,--
> As whi this fissh, and naught that, cometh to were.
>
> Ye folk a lawe han set in universe;
> And this knowe I by hem that loveres be,
> That whoso stryveth with yow hath the werse.
> III, 22-38

The passage eleaborates on the powers of love and repeats, for emphasis, the three aspects of love celebrated in the poem: its universality ("Ye folk a lawe han set in universe"), its power to unify ("Ye holden regne and hous in unitee"), and the helplessness of one in love ("That whoso stryveth with yow hath the werse"). This reiteration of theme introduces the middle book of the poem in which universal forces, erratic planets, and, of course, the lovers, all conjoin to celebrate the power of love. This third book presents the change in Troilus's fortune from despair to joy in the progress of his earthly affair with Criseyde, but he experiences yet another change in his fortune (from joy to despair) before he realizes the stability and superiority of divine love.

But the narrator feels is necessary to invoke another aid in addition to Venus. He calls upon Caliope in the last stanza of the proem:

> Ye in my naked herte sentement
> Inhielde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse.
> Caliope, this vois be now present,

> For now is nede; sestow nat my destresse,
> How I mot telle anon right the gladnesse
> Of Troilus, to Venus heryinge?
> To which gladnesse, who nede hath, god hym brynge!
> III, 43-49

In the proem of Book II the narrator invoked Clio because "That of no sentement I this endite." Here, however, when he wishes to show sentiment, he calls upon the Muse of epic song. In so doing he not only elevates the tone and style, but also heightens the action and underscores his purpose. Gone is the naive narrator who claims no knowledge of love, and subdued is the conspicuous narrator cajoling his audience. This change of tone is, perhaps, most evident in the last line of the proem, where the narrator ends with a pious prayer rather than prosecutio.

The proem of the third book, then, situated as it is in the middle of the poem, functions to unify the themes and action. Chaucer has elevated his style and modified the tone of this book to intensify the involvement of the narrator.

The narrator has implied in the proem that his aesthetic distance from the story has shifted, and as the climactic consummation approaches, his role significantly increases.[8] These frequent commentaries of the narrator

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[8]The narrator has more lines in Book III than in any other book of the poem.

suggest an intimate relationship to the action which, paradoxically, intensifies his impotence. Although he often interrupts his tale with such statements as, "And certeyn is, to purpos for to go, And shortly of this proces for to pace . . . . Now is ther litel more for to doone," he can do little to control the situation; he can only relate it as fully and accurately as possible. Such is the tone of the first major commentary in this book:

> But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde
> That every word, or look, or sonde, or cheere
> Of Troilus that I rehersen sholde,
> In al this while unto his lady deere.
> I trowe it were a long thyng for to here.
> Or of what wight that stant in swich disjoynte,
> His wordes alle, or every look, to poynte.
>
> For soothe, I have nat herd it don or this,
> In story non, ne no man here I wene;
> And though I wolde, I koude nat, ywys;
> For ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
> That wolde, as seyth myn auctour, wel contene
> And hondred vers, of which hym liste nat write;
> How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endite?
>
> But to the grete effect . . . .
> III, 491-505

The narrator appears to be ambivalent. On the one hand he states that since his source omits a hundred verses at this point, he will omit them too. But in Book II (1564) he stated, "prolixitee best is," He wants to dwell in great detail on these matters, but chooses not to. On the other hand, he has devoted fifteen lines to stating that he will rush on to "the grete effect." The commentary

itself feigns hesitation to continue the narrative and contradicts itself. The very tone of this ambivalence contributes to Chaucer's purpose. One can well imagine the narrator's impatience to unite the lovers, which, obviously, has been the object of half the poem. At the same time, knowing the sorrow that will follow the joy of their meeting, he appears hesitant to bring them together. His complex position as sympathetic commentator and impotent observer is heightened, then, by this ambivalent pose. Although he has often disclaimed his own ability or success as a lover, the feelings which he, and his audience as well, vicariously experience are those of sympathetic participants and impotent victims.

The helplessness of the lover involved in the machinations of love is made more explicit in the commentary which soon follows:

> Dredeles, it clere was in the wynd
> Of every pie and every lette-game;
> Thus al is wel, for al the world is blynd
> In this matere, bothe wolde and tame.
> This tymber is al redy up to frame.
> III, 526-530

This commentary is the first which alludes to Criseyde as a victim in the machinations of Love; heretofore, Troilus has been the prey of Cupid's arrow, Fortune's whim, and Venus's design. Now is Criseyde readied much as game for a hunter. Neither Fortune nor Venus apparently manipulates

this plot, however; Pandarus is seemingly the sole author and executor. Though Troilus is the puppet of universal forces, Criseyde is the dupe of her uncle. This distinction serves not only to relieve Criseyde somewhat of responsibility for loving Troilus, and, by extension, to explain her defection to Diomede, but also stresses the different conceptions Troilus and Criseyde maintain toward love. Ruled by immortal powers, Troilus idealizes love with overtones of spiritual transcendence; deceived by mortal intrigues, Criseyde realizes a love with undertones of earthly transcience.

Although she is duped by the intrigues of Pandarus, the gods do, nevertheless, influence the success of the tryst. The narrator interrupts again in a lyrical outburst, declaiming the influence of the heavens:

> But O Fortune, executrice of wyerdes,
> O influences of this hevenes hye,
> Soth is that, under god, ye ben oure hierdes.
> Though to us bestes ben the causes wrie.
> This mene I now, for she gan homward hye,
> But execut was al bisyde hire leve
> The goddes will, for which she moste bleve.
> III, 627-633

This stanza immediately precedes the description of the astrological conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. Though Pandarus had calculated his invitation to coincide with this astrological phenomenon, the decisive storm is certainly beyond his control. Here Chaucer implies the

limitations of man's will, for it is the Goddess Fortuna who ulimately influences men's lives. This relationship of one's will to fate echoes the narrator's relationship to the poem: though he can bring to life the story he relates, he cannot change the fortune of his characters, for his historical sources have already cast <u>their</u> fate. He can manipulate, in various minor ways, the actions of the lovers, but ultimately his sources control the outcome of the tale.

As the climax nears, the narrator's commentaries become more proverbial, and he uses <u>exempla</u> to clarify his didactic purpose:

> But now help god to quenchen al this sorwe!
> So hope I that he shal, for he best may;
> For I have seyn, of ful misty morwe
> Folwen ful ofte a merye someres day;
> And after wynter foloweth grene May.
> Men sen alday, and reden ek in stories,
> That after sharpe shoures ben victories.
> III, 1058-1064
>
> . . . . . .
>
> What myghte or may the sely larke seye,
> Whan that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?
> I kan no more, but of thise ilke twaye,--
> To whom this tale sucre be or soor,--
> Though that I tarie a yer, som tyme I moot,
> After myn auctour, telle of hire gladnesse,
> As wel as I have told hire hevynesse.
> III, 1191-1197
>
> . . . . . .

O sooth is seyd, that heled for to be
As of a fever or other gret siknesse,
Men moste drynke, as men may alday se,
Ful bittre drynke; and for to han gladnesse,
Men drynken ofte peyne and gret distresse;
I mene it here as for this aventure,
Than thorugh a peyne hath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth more swete,
That bitternesse assaied was byforn;
For out of wo in blisse now they flete,
Non swich they felten, syn they were born.
Now is this bet than bothe two be lorn.
For love of god, take every womman heede
To werken thus, whan it comth to the neede.
III, 1212-1225

Metaphorically, these three passages of commentary present a progression of tropes which depicts Chaucer's thematic conception of love and complements the development of the lovers' affair. The first stanza shows that natural changes often improve situations. Incorporated into this figure, however, is the mutable and unpredictable nature of weather and love; a clear day may follow a misty morning, a desirable season may follow an undesirable one; thus, like the weather, love, though natural, is unpredictable.

The second stanza uses the figure of the hunt. Criseyde is appropriately represented as the lark,[9] but Troilus's appearance as a "sperhauk" is ambiguous, for he

[9]Ironically, Criseyde, after the consummation, is referred to as a falcon; Troilus is prey.

himself has been in the clutches of a mightier huntress--Venus. This metaphor, interjected during the climactic union, functions effectively to connect Chaucer's figurative use of birds elsewhere in the poem. Earlier, in Criseyde's dream (II, 918-931), Troilus is represented as an eagle who rips Criseyde's heart from her breast. Soon following this stanza (III, 1233-1239), Criseyde is compared to a nightingale, not unlike the one which sang as she dreamed of the eagle's attack. Finally, Troilus is shown carrying a hawk when Criseyde departs from him during the exchange of prisoners (V, 65). In addition to its unifying effect, symbolic birds explicate the complexities of changing emotional involvement as Troilus first steals Criseyde's heart, then possesses her body, and, finally, allows her to fly from him.

The third passage of this commentary, in addition to explicating Chaucer's theme that woe is necessary in order to achieve the joys of love, also serves as a unifying metaphor which changes in degree, rather than in kind, later in the poem. Though Troilus is shown here to be a man recovered from sickness, a descriptive simile three stanzas later depicts him as one who has returned from the threshold of death through the saving grace of earthly love. Finally, when Troilus actually dies and

ascends to the eighth sphere, Chaucer implies the celestial joys which divine love can bring despite the necessity of death. Just as Troilus and Criseyde are to be united, this theme and these two conceptions of spiritual and earthly love are fused when the narrator exclaims, "For love of god"--a religious oath applied to the sexual act. These commentary passages explicate the thematic unity of the poem, imply an aesthetic unity through metaphor and image, and again reveal the growing involvement of the narrator.

The opening commentary of the consummation episode includes statements which declare that the joyful union of the lovers "Were impossible to my wit to seye . . . . That is so heigh that no man kan it telle." The concluding commentary echoes this same idea:

> But how although I kan nat tellen al,
> As kan myn auctour of his excellence,
> Yit have I seyde, and god toform, and shal.
> III, 1401-1403

The last line of commentary in this passage implies a further unity in the poem. Having presented the epitome of the lovers' joy, the narrator says, "But now to purpos of my rather speche." He has presented half of his intended tale "Fro wo to wale, and after out of joie," and now passes on toward the second half. In this way commentaries help mark the periods of development in the poem, and "rather speche" reminds the audience that, although this

section is a climax, more of the tale is to be told.

Rhetorically, these commentaries help to link the beginning and the end of Book III just as the consummation helps to link the beginning to the ending of the poem. The exclamatio in the commentary:

> O blisful nyght, of hem so longe isought,
> How blithe unto hem bothe two thow weere!
> III, 1316-1317

is an echo of the opening lines of the book:

> O blisful light, of which the bemes clere
> Adorneth al the thridde hevene faire.
> III, 1-2

Night, the time when Venus can most clearly spread her blissful light, has benefited the lovers in the same way that Venus has, for just as they have had to suffer woe before they could enjoy the fruits of love, the night has brought a violent yet opportune storm which brings them together. This attainment of love's joy through suffering is further implied in the narrator's lament over his own state:

> Why ne hadde I swich oon with my soule ybought,
> Ye, or the leeste joie that was there?
> III, 1319-1320

and in his condemnation of those who are inhibited in love:

> So parfit joie may no nygard have.
> III, 1365

. . . . . .

They shal forgon the white and ek the rede,
And lyve in wo, ther god yeve hem mischaunce,
And every lovere in his trouthe avaunce!
III, 1370-1372

The occupatio at the beginning of this commentary, which begins, "Ikan no more, ..." (III, 1314), is echoed at the end of the book:

I kan no more, but syn that ye wol wende,
Ye heried ben for ay withouten ende.
III, 1812-1813

In fact, most of the remaining commentary in Book III is devoted to occupatio:

I passe al that which nedeth naught to seye.
III, 1576

Nat nedeth it to yow, syn they ben met,
To axe at me if that they blithe were . . .
III, 1681-1682

Comenden so, ne may nat here suffise.
This joie may nat writen be with inke;
This passeth al that herte may bythynke.
III, 1692-1694

The psychological and aesthetic advantages of refusing to describe the joys of love are obvious, for Chaucer evokes the memory of those "thau hau ben at the feste" and the imagination of those who have not. These occupationes differ from those of Book II, for they do justify the narrator's refusal to dwell on these intimate details. He simply is unable to ("I kan no more"), not because he is unskilled, but because "this passeth al that herte may

bythynke." This emotional involvement is antithetical to the objective narrator who earlier said, "I speeke of love unfelyngly." "The lawe of kynde" has bound the narrator to his poem as effectively as it has bound Troilus to Criseyde. Similarily, this change provides the audience with a dramatic parallel which is but another extension of Chaucer's theme.

The ending of Book III differs from the endings of the other books; it includes an apostrophe:

> Thow lady bryght, the doughter to Dyone,
> Thy blynde and wynged sone ek, daun Cupide,
> Ye sustren nyne ek, that by Elicone,
> In hil Parsaso listen for tabide,
> That ye thus fer han deyned me to gyde,
> I kan no more, but syn that ye wol wende,
> Ye heried ben for ay withouten ende.
>
> Thorugh yow have I seyd fully in my song
> Theffect and joie of Troilus servise,
> Al be that ther was som disese among,
> As to myn auctour listeth to devise
> My thridde book now ende ich in this wyse;
> III, 1807-1818

This commentary which closes Book III concludes the rising action of the tale. Therefore, the narrator bids Venus and Muses farewell, for though they guided him in singing of the rise of Troilus's joy, he will call upon others to guide him through the decline to Troilus's death. Through his celebrating the joyous rewards of courtly love, he has experienced something of that joy in telling the story. By immediately bidding Venus farewell, however, he emphasizes

and demonstrates the mutable, ephemoral, and transient quality of her kind of joy.

IV. BOOK IV

Just as the joyous tone of the previous book is struck in the opening exclamatio, "O blisful light," Book IV strikes its somber tone with the opening stanza:

> But al to litel, waylawey the whyle,
> Laseth swich joie, ythonked be Fortune,
> That semeth trewest when she wol bygyle,
> And kan to fooles so hire song entune,
> That she hem hent and blent, traitour comune;
> And whan a wight is from hire whiel ythrowe,
> Than laugheth she, and maketh hym a mowe.
> IV, 1-7

Having seen Troilus rise from despair to joy through the beneficent influence of love, the narrator now evokes the wheel of Fortune to show that without motive or intent, Goddess Fortuna indifferently changes men's condition. The image of the wheel helps unify the poem, representing, as it does, the rising and falling, action of the story. The opening conjunction, "But" also serves this purpose because it not only indicates a change from that which has gone before, but also implies the addition of a coordinate and equally important development of the tale. Chaucer appears to emphasize his theme even in so small a detail as the placement of a conjunction. To tell the full story of the ways of earthly love, the narrator must relate the other turning of the wheel as well; he must tell of the

imminent woe as well as the eminent joy.

The necessity yet hesitancy of the narrator to continue is explicit in the next stanza of the proem, his pose as objective historian here gives way entirely to that of an intimately involved and compassionate sympathizer:

> From Troilus she gan hire brighte face
> Awey to wrythe, and took of hym non heede,
> But caste hym clene oute of his lady grace,
> And on hire whiel she sette up Diomede;
> For which right now myn herte gynneth blede,
> Quaketh for drede of that I moste endite.
> IV, 8-14

Mention of Diomede in this proem raises problems concerning Chaucer's intention and gives rise to conjecture of the poem's structure. Professor Malone states that Chaucer intended Book IV to include all the remaining action of the poem.[10] Considerable evidence appears to support this view. Diomede's fortune is mentioned in the proem of Book IV, but his participation in the tale does not occur until Book V. The proem of Book IV is the last in Troilus and Criseyde: Book V contains an introductory stanza but not a formal proem. Similarly, the third stanza of this proem indicates that Chaucer intended Book IV to be his final book:

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[10] Kemp Malone, Chapters on Chaucer, p. 120.

> For how Criseyde Troilus forsook
> Or at the leeste how that she was unkynde,
> Moot hennesforth ben matere of my book.
> IV, 15-17

In addition to using "book" in the singular, these lines refer to action that does not take place until Book V. Finally, the last lines of this proem, in which the narrator invokes Mars, also include reference to action that does not take place until Book V:

> This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,
> So that the losse of lyf and love yfeere
> Of Troilus be fully shewed here.
> IV, 26-28

Since the proem indicates that Book IV would contain all the remaining action of the poem, it would appear that Professor Malone is correct in suggesting that it was intended to be the last book.

In spite of this evidence, however, one must remember, if the work of Root is to be accepted, that Chaucer put his hand to the manuscript after it was finished and revised some passages.[11] Chaucer, then, edited Book IV, but did not change the proem to limit its information solely to that book, nor did he add a proem to Book V.

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[11] Even if Chaucer did not completely revise Book V, as some stylistic and structural inconsistencies may indicate, he certainly edited Book IV: the shifting of stanza 108 and the addition of the soliloquy on free choice (953-1085) attest to the extensiveness of his revision.

Moreover, two variant readings in two early manuscripts (A) indicate that this proem introduced the last book of the poem. Harleian 1239 (identified as H3 by Root), reads for line twenty-six "Thys fyfte and laste boke."[12] Harleian 2392 (H4), a manuscript slightly later than H3 though still in the early A group, reads for the same line, "This feerde & laste book."[13] The presence of "laste" in these earliest manuscripts, considered in light of the above mentioned features of the proem, leads one to believe that, at least at one time, Chaucer intended the proem of Book IV to introduce the last section of his poem.

That this last section was to include only what is now found in Book IV, however, is hardly possible to accept. Chaucer knew what was yet to be done in his poem; he knew that five books of Il Filostrato remained, and he alludes in the proem to action which he knows he must include. Possibly Chaucer conceived all the remaining action of the poem as a single unit, but having written it, felt it was too long and divided it into two parts. This conjecture is probable if one can assume that he intended the poem for oral presentation. Dividing the section into two parts would, in turn, have given him an opportunity to add such

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[12] Root, Troilus and Criseyde, p. 234.

[13] Ibid.

sections as the soliloquy on free will and the Teseide stanzas (V, 1807-1827), which, it is generally agreed, were added after the original conception of the poem. However, in order to present the two books as a single conception, he denies Book V a proem.

Such organization gives the poem a structural conception that contributes to its thematic unity. Although the poem is divided into sections serving the needs of presentation, such divisions should not, and ultimately do not, interfere with the structural unity and conception of the work. Books four and five together cover a single section of the poem, fulfilling the second half of Chaucer's intention to tell how Troilus falls "after out of joie." Related to the image of Fortune's wheel, which he uses in this proem, the remainder of the poem traces Troilus's downward journey from the apex of his adventure in love until he "is from hire whiel ythrowe."

The other half of Chaucer's intention, to tell the rising action "fro wo to wele," is structurally balanced with books four and five by its limitation to books two and three. At the end of Book I only the state of Troilus's woe has been established; the rise of his condition out of despair does not begin until Book II. If Books II and III are to be in structural balance with Books IV and V, then

they too should be joined in a unity which indicates a single conception. Chaucer has joined the two books, not by omitting a proem as he does in Book V, but by inventing the scene at Deiphebus's house. Although he interrupts the scene with the proem of Book III, the continuity of the action joins the books, effecting a single flow of narrative from the beginnings of Book II to the end of Book III. The "wheeling" of Troilus's fortune is clearly seen to begin with the opening of Book II, to reach its peak at the end of Book III, and to move downward from there until his death.

In the closing stanza of the proem the narrator invokes the Erinyes and Mars to help him finish the last section of the poem:

> O ye Herynes, Nyghtes doughtren thre,
> That endeles compleynen evere in pyne,
> Megera, Alete, and ek Thesiphone,
> Thow cruel Mars ek, fader to Quyryne,
> This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,
> So that the losse of lyf and love yfeere
> Of Troilus be fully shewed here.
> IV, 22-28

He invokes Tisiphone in the proem of Book I, but here calls on three of the Erinyes. Just as he shows that it is appropriate to invoke Tisiphone, he implies by the order in which he names them, the appropriateness of addressing all three sisters here. Megaera, known as the "Jealous," plays a meaningful and decisive role in the remaining action

of the poem. Without the influence of Megaera, the effects of Alecto, "the unresting," would not, perhaps, be so obvious an influence in the behavior of Troilus, and most of his behavior in Book V reflects the influence of Alecto. Chaucer uses this invocation not only for the sake of convention or appropriateness, then, but also to imply and effect further unity.

His invocation of Mars also contributes to the unity of the poem. Although the reason for having the narrator call upon Mars is not at first apparent, the use of this god and all that he suggests unifies a number of relationships at this point. Just as the invocation of Venus in Book III refers to both the goddess and the planet, the mention of Mars in the proem of Book IV suggests their relationship in both mythology and astrology. Criseyde has been associated with Venus, and Troilus has been associated with Mars. Awareness of the relationships of Mars and Venus in mythology encourages one to predict the relationship of Troilus and Criseyde, especially if one recalls Chaucer's "Complaint of Mars." In addition to their thematic uses in descriptive passages, astrological relationships also serve Chaucer symbolically to identify relationships and to universalize his story.

Beyond signifying the levels of relationship

between Troilus and Criseyde, the allusion to Mars also brings Diomede into Chaucer's scheme. He is second only to Achilles as a Greek warrior, just as Troilus is second only to Hector in Troy. One of the more famous incidents of the Trojan war depicts the battle between Mars and Diomede in which Diomede, with the help of Athene, wounds Mars; it is also with the aid of (Pallas) Athene that Diomede destroys Troy. A further connection is implied in the unusual appositive with which the narrator addresses Mars, "fader to Quyryne." Although one reason for mentioning the founder of Rome might be to imply the fall of Troy (and by extension, Troilus), mention of Mars's offspring may bring to mind another of his sons, Diomede, a namesake of Troilus's rival.

Chaucer brings together in this proem astrological, mythological, and historic relationships which exemplify and complement his theme. Book III celebrates the ebullient joy of earthly love, Book IV depicts the ephemeral and vulnerable nature of that love by showing the ultimate control with which Fortune manipulates earthly affairs.

The growing emotional involvement of the narrator is evident in the first commentary that follows the proem:

> O Juvenal, lord! soth is thy sentence,
> That litel wyten folk what is to yerne,

That they ne fynde in hire desir offence;
For cloude of errour lat hem nat discerne
What best is; and, lo, here ensaumple as yerne.
This folk desiren now deliveraunce
Of Antenor, that broughte hem to meschaunce.

For he was after traitour to the town
Of Troye; allas, they quytte hym out to rathe!
O nyce world, lo the discrecion!
Criseyde, which that nevere dide hem scathe,
Shal now no lenger in hire blisse bathe;
But Antenor, he shal come hom to towne,
And she shal out; thus syede here and howne.
IV, 197-210

The narrator's outburst reveals a new dimension of his theme and his growing feeling for Criseyde. He criticizes the world, now, not only for its blindness to the ways of love, but for its general ignorance and false discernment. The metaphor, "cloud of errour," suggests the title of the contemporary treatise, "The Cloud of Unknowing," which employs this same metaphor to imply the ignorance which prevents man from comprehending the ways of God.[14] Chaucer has frequently suggested this aspect of his theme, but usually only in relationship to the difference between man's attitudes toward earthly love and spiritual love. The narrator suggests, here, an expansion of his earlier statements to imply fuller significance of the theme.

This emotional outburst shows the narrator's

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[14] Evelyn Underhill, Cloud of Unknowing (London: J. M. Watkins, 1934).

involvement, for his comment is occasioned not so much by the exchange itself as by the unfairness of the exchange to Criseyde. Chaucer has linked the fate of Troy to the fate of Troilus--the exchange of Criseyde for Antenor results in his treachery and her perfidy. The narrator's commentary, then, suggests that circumstances and not character alone lead Criseyde to betray Troilus.

The occupatio of the next commentary further reveals the emotional concern of the narrator:

> How myghte it evere yred ben or ysonge,
> The pleynte that she made in hire destresse?
> I not; but, as for me, my litel tonge,
> If I discryven wolde hire hevynesse,
> It sholde make hire sorwe seme lesse
> Than that it was, and childisshly deface
> Hire heigh compleynte, and therfore ich it pace:
> IV, 799-805

The poignancy of this occupatio differs from the tone of others. The narrator refuses to describe Criseyde's grief not because of incompetence, but because--he claims--her grief would seem less if it were described. He uses this same reason for failing to describe the joy of their first night together. But now, as then, he is unable to continue because he himself is so moved by the scene. More and more, as the story nears the decisive turning of Criseyde, the narrator uses occupatio to express his personal feelings.

The narrator further attempts to prepare for the perfidy of Criseyde by a comment after her long speech to

Troilus:

> And treweliche, as writen wel I fynde,
> That al this thyng was seyd of good entente;
> And that hire herte trewe was and kynde
> Towardes hym, and spak right as she mente;
> And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente,
> And was in purpos evere to be trewe.
> Thus writen they that of hire werkes knewe..
> IV, 1415-1421

He stresses Criseyde's intention to be faithful but again offers the excuse that her change comes because of circumstances rather than character, though both play a part in her decision. Nevertheless, such excuses reveal more of his character than of hers. Regardless of her intent, she does change, and since such a change is still subject to the influence of Venus, the narrator implies that this is the way of earthly love. The more his commentaries relieve Criseyde of responsibility for her acts, then, the more he stresses the mutable and ephemeral nature of her earthly love.

The closing commentary of Book IV repeats the kind of occupatio often found in this book:

> For mannes hed ymagynen ne kan,
> Nentendement considere, ne tonge telle,
> The cruel peynes of this woful nan,
> That passen every torment down in helle.
> For whan he saugh that she ne myghte dwelle,
> Which that his soule out of his herte rente.
> IV, 1695-1700

Previously the narrator refused to comment on the joys of Troilus when he possessed Criseyde; now he refuses to

describe Troilus's woe. Since the narrator did relate the woe of Troilus when he was struck with love, his unwillingness to describe this woe suggests that it differs. Although Troilus suffered woe in love, the depth of woe in separation is even greater. In showing the excess of woe at the end of Book IV, Chaucer implies the extent of despair Troilus experiences in Book V. If the woe which Troilus feels at losing Criseyde for a few days is indescribable, then the behavior of Troilus at discovering her perfidy becomes more credible. Chaucer, again, uses his commentaries not only for the formal and necessary requirements of convention, such as opening and closing books, but also to prepare for future events, to unify varying elements, and to point to the relationships within the poem which support its form and structure.

V. BOOK V

Although Book V has no formal proem, the first stanza of the book serves a somewhat similar function:

> Aprochen gan the fatal destyne
> That Joves hath in disposicioun,
> And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren thre,
> Committeth to don execucioun;
> For which Criseyde moste out of the town,
> And Troilus shal dwellen forth in pyne
> Til Lathesis his thred no lenger twyne.
> V, 1-7

Certainly no invocation appears in this opening stanza, but the address to the three Parcae remotely echoes the address

to the three Erinyes in the proem of Book IV: despair--both of Troilus and the narrator--continues as the cominant tone.

Much of the commentary in Book V is not typical of the commentary in the rest of the poem. The narrator seems more concerned with foreshadowing, explaining, and relating the remainder of the action than with moralizing upon it. As Troilus accompanies Criseyde toward the gates of Troy, for example, the narrator breaks into the action with a startling exclamatio:

> But, Troilus, now farewel al this joie,
> For shaltow nevere sen hire eft in Troie!
> V, 27-28

This outburst foretells the course of action and shows the extreme empathy of the narrator, which intensifies his emotional relationship to the poem. Although there is no doubt that the narrator states what he knows to be true, he seems to be speaking for Troilus, or at least expressing feelings that Troilus himself should express. The frustration implied in this outburst brings the narrator and Troilus closer together than ever before. This situation intensifies the irony, however, for no matter how empathetic the narrator might be, no matter how vocal his outbursts become, Troilus does not know what the narrator knows, nor, indeed, what the audience knows.

In addition to this use of commentary to foretell aspects of the story, other uses of it indicate an urgency to finish the poem. Chaucer uses commentary to explain or tell of characters' motives, for example, rather than to show such motives through action or dialogue. The following commentary interrupts Troilus's thoughts by explaining why he does not escape with Criseyde:

> But why he nolde don so fel a dede,
> That shal I seyn, and whi hym liste it spare;
> He hadde in herte alweyes a manere drede,
> Lest that Criseyde in rumor of this fare
> Sholde han ben slayn; lo, this was al his care.
> And ellis, certeyn, as I seyde yore,
> He hadde it don, withouten wordes more.
> V, 50-56

Rather than continue the internal monologue or present his motives through dialogue, Chaucer chooses to interrupt with the narrator, remarks to explain Troilus's inaction.

This hurried pace is also evident in the use of commentary for explicit transitions, such as when the narrator moves the scene from Criseyde at the Greek camp to Troilus at Troy:

> But here I leve hire with hire fader dwelle,
> And forth I wol of Troilus yow telle.
> V, 195-196

The restlessness of the narrator is further revealed in his short commentary which interrupts Troilus's thinking on Criseyde while he is at Sarpedon's house:

> But, weylaway, al this nas but a maze;
> Fortune his howve entended bet to glaze.
> V, 468-469

The impatience of the narrator characterizes the nervousness of Troilus by the spasmodic movement of the narrative. Because the setting of the poem has been expanded to include the Greek camp, and because the action is swift and varied in Book V, the narrative movement appears shifting and fragmented, and the narrator seems to be as nervous as Troilus.

Once Criseyde has left Troy, the imminent fall of Troilus's fortune is made evident through the circumstances of the story, and through the counterpoint of the narrator's commentaries:

> And shortly, lest that ye may tale breke.
> V, 1032
>
> And after this the storie telleth us.
> V, 1037
>
> I finde ek in stories elleswhere.
> V, 1044
>
> Men seyn, I not . . .
> V, 1050
>
> But trewely, the storie telleth us.
> V, 1051

The effect of so many brief qualifying remarks in so short a space reveals the narrator's discomfort. The intrusion of fate upon Troilus's joy is appalled by the interruptions of the narrator, who, aware of the inevitable, emphasizes his own helplessness. While exhibiting a pressing rush to finish the story, these remarks also imply

a hesitancy to tell of Criseyde's change of heart. Although the narrator has never assumed responsibility for Criseyde's actions, as the unsavory climax nears, he attempts to relieve himself, through these repetitive commentaries, of any responsibility.

As the final shift of Criseyde's loyalty nears, the narrator's explanations, transitions, occupationes, and sententiae punctuate the narrative, effecting a nervous staccato which contrasts with the flowing development of the rising action. The narrator's occupationes in this section of the poem further imply an uneasiness in his relationship to Troilus:

> Who koude telle aright or ful discryve
> His wo, his pleynte, his langour, and his pyne?
> Naught alle the men that han or ben on lyve!
> Thow, redere, maist thi self ful wel devyne
> That swich a wo my wit kan nat defyne.
> On ydel for to write it sholde I swynke,
> Whan that my wit is wery it to thynke.
> V, 267-273

> What sholde I telle his wordes that he seyde?
> V, 946

Although the narrator states that he cannot tell of such woe, he gives the impression that he refuses to relate Troilus's feelings not so much because he is artistically incompetent, but because he is emotionally distraught. This emotional involvement of the narrator, which has grown evident throughout the poem, is most pronounced in Book V: it contributes as much to the total effect of the poem as

any other narrative element.

The narrator's emotional relationship to Troilus is empathetic, but his relationship to Criseyde is sympathetic. He reveals this sympathy most explicitly in what may be considered the most plaintive commentary in the entire poem:

> But, trewely, how longe it was bytwene,
> That she forsook hym for this Diomede,
> Ther is non auctour telleth it, I wene.
> Take every man now to his bokes heede;
> He shal no terme fynden, out of drede.
> For though that he began to wowe hire soone.
> Or he hire wan, yit was ther more to doone.
>
> Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde,
> Forther than the storye wol devyse.
> Hire name, allas, is punysshed so wide,
> That for hire gilt it oughte ynough suffise.
> And if I myghte excuse hire any wise,
> For she so sory was for hire untrouthe,
> Iwis, I wolde excuse hire yit for routhe.
> V, 1086-1099

In the first stanza the narrator elaborates on the uncertainty of the time which lapsed before Criseyde turned to Diomede. Certainly, Chaucer knew from Benoit that at least two years passed before she forsakes her Trojan lover, but he refuses to say so. In this decision to leave the time lapse obscure, one can conjecture the dilemna Chaucer confronted and appreciate his solution. That Chaucer felt pressed to finish the poem is evidenced by the fragmented organization of Book V and the compressed effect of much of its commentary. Knowing that the final infidelity

of Criseyde took two years, he is faced with the artistic problem of maintaining the swift and nervous movement of the narrative while justifying Criseyde's perfidy by accountable motives. Interruption of the narrative at this point with a two-year lapse would flaw the unity and destroy the tension that Chaucer has maintained. However, to show her unfaithfulness in too short a time would either blemish the poem with an improbability or contradict the character of the woman he has so compassionately presented. Chaucer conceals the time and the narrator excuses her "yit for routhe": Chaucer maintains the pace and unity of the poem, though he jeopardizes Criseyde's character.[15] In the second stanza the narrator attempts to alleviate condemnation of Criseyde by showing his sympathy for her. In addition to saying that he would excuse her out of compassion, he also states that he will not chide her; her name has been sufficiently punished, and she was sorry for her "untrouthe." All these statements contribute to the narrator's attempt to relieve Criseyde of censure and intensify his sympathetic attachment to her.

He further implies (throughout much of the remaining commentary) that the character of Criseyde is not alone responsible for her perfidy--Fortune is to blame. Except for the long concluding commentaries which close the

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[15] A jeopardy which he attempts to recompense in Legend of Good Women.

poem, the remaining commentaries in Book V reflect the narrator's fatalistic attitude and his concern with the influence of Fortune in the lives of men. The first of these immediately follows the receipt of Criseyde's letter by Troilus:

> But, Troilus, thow maist now, est or west,
> Pipe in an ivy lef, if that the lest,
> Thus goth the world; god shilde us fro meschaunce
> And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce!
> V, 1432-1435

The proverb in the first two lines of this commentary addresses Troilus (one of the two times the narrator explicitly addresses him), but the maxim in the last two addresses the audience. In this transition from the specific and concrete case of Troilus to the general and abstract condition of man, Chaucer employs commentary to point up the application of his theme to his audience. One should note, however, that although the sentiment expressed in this commentary has been implicit earlier, it is not until Criseyde's unfaithfulness becomes fact that the narrator surrenders to the fatalism implied in "Thus goth the world."

Chaucer further identifies the fate of Troilus with the fate of man in showing that the fate of Troy is bound inextricably to the fortunes of Troilus:

> Fortune, which that permutacion
> Of thynges hath, as it is hire committed
> By purveyaunce and disposicioun

> Of heigh Jove, as regnes shal be flitted
> Fro folk in folk, or whan they shal ben smytted,
> Gan pulle awey the fetheres brighte of Troie
> Fro day to day, til they ben bare of joie.
> V, 1541-1547

As the certainty of Criseyde's unfaithfulness becomes more evident to Troilus and he becomes more despondent, Troy itself becomes joyless and its fortunes in the war worsen. The commentary also repeats the philosophical assumptions upon which Chaucer's theme is based: Fortune is the agency of Divine Providence and influences the lives of men. Ultimately, then, Troilus, Troy, and all mankind are subordinate to the will of God. The influence of Dante and Boethius on this passage indicate that this concept is medieval rather than Hellenic and that Chaucer is making explicit, in the narrator's commentaries, the fusion of Christian and pagan elements.

As he anticipates the closing exhortation concerning the role of courtly love in a Christian world, Chaucer prepares for it by making clear in the narrator's commentaries the role of Fortune in men's lives:

> Swich is this world, whoso it kan byholde;
> In ech estat is litel hertes reste;
> God leve us for to take it for the beste!
> V, 1748-1750

The god referred to is clearly the Christian God, not the god of courtly love that was addressed in the opening lines of the poem. The sentiment of this commentary also

shows an expansion of the narrator's original interest--to serve servants of Love. His moral application now embraces the transient quality of the whole secular world. Chaucer has celebrated secular love, and by showing the highest joys it can bring, he has shown its limitations: "whoso it kan byholde" knows that it is the best we can attain in this world.

As Chaucer prepares for the didactic conclusion, the dramatic change in the narrator's relationships to the story and to his audience is completed. His aesthetic detachment from the story has so shifted that his emotional involvement with Troilus and Criseyde infectiously induces his audience to a comparable involvement, and the informal intimacy with which he earlier addressed them has become, because of his own sobering experience in telling the story, a serious and compassionate moral concern. The dramatic process of discovery which has been evident in the performance of the narrator and presented in the action of the poem provides an effective preparation for the intrinsic morals expressed in the epilogue.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The controversial conclusion of Troilus and Criseyde brings together the inplicit threads of Chaucer's theme: courtly love is ephemeral and undependable; sensual joys, though they are the most comforting one can attain in this life, are inferior to the bliss of celestial happiness. Therefore, lovers should not confuse the two but, passing beyond secular love, embrace the love of the Christian God. The parallel developments of the cosmic drama, the Trojan war, and the narrator's involvement, coalesce in the moral resolves of the concluding stanzas.

The initial problem one confronts when analyzing the conclusion is, as Professor Malone states, where does the ending start?[1] Malone asserts that the ending is in two parts: the first includes stanzas 250, 251, 252, 258, and 262, and the second part comprises stanzas 263 to 267.[2] Professor Meech, on the other hand, states that stanza 253 terminates the first of two segments which make up the

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[1] Malone, Chapters on Chaucer, p. 28.

[2] Ibid.

poet's finale.[3] In view of the necessary functions the closing must serve, one may, however, perceive this section as a series of endings rather than a single one. Within this segment, Chaucer first brings to a close the dramatic action of Book V, then he concludes the narrative plot of the story, and finally, he brings the poem itself to a close. Though related to each other, these three separate endings are presented individually and progressively, each expanding and intensifying the theme.

Having shown Troilus's certain knowledge of Criseyde's unfaithfulness and having summarized Troilus's reactions by his heated killing of Greeks, the narrator summarizes the concluding action of Book V. But he interrupts this action with curtailing commentary:

> And if I hadde ytaken for to write,
> The armes of this ilke worthi man,
> Than wolde ich of his batailles endite.
> But for that I to writen first beigan
> Of his love I have seyde as I kan,--
> His worthi dedes, whose list hem heere,
> Rede Dares, he kan telle hem alle iferre.
> V, 1765-1771

By breaking off the narrator's summary of Troilus's exploits in battle, Chaucer inplies that such material is not relevant to the substance of Book V, which is concerned with

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[3]Sanford B. Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus, p. 132.

Criseyde's turning from Troilus to Diomede and its effect on Troilus. Since these events have taken place, there is no need to continue. Therefore, if a moral is to be made, it is most appropriate that it be presented immediately, and Chaucer does just that. The following two stanzas, addressed to the audience, moralize only on the lesson that grows out of the events of Book V:

> /I have seyd as I kan . . ./
> Bysechyng every lady bright of hewe,
> And every gentil womman, what she be,
> That, al be that Criseyde was untrewe,
> That for that gilt in other bokes se;
> And gladlier I wol write, if yow leste,
> Penelopes trouthe and good Alceste.
>
> Ne sey nat this al oonly for thise men,
> But moost for wommen that bitraised be
> Thorugh fals folk; god yeve hem sorwe, amen!
> That with hire grete wit and subtilite
> Bytraise yow! And this commeveth me
> To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,
> Beth ware of men, and herkeneth what I seye.
> V, 1772-1785

The lesson, of course, is not what one expects: beware of false women. Such a lesson is so obvious, however, that the narrator expands its application to include everyone. He still laments Criseyde's perfidy, and while pleading blamelessness for himself asks that she not be judged too harshly. This peroration applies only to Book V, however, for statements relating to broader aspects of the theme are presented elsewhere in the poem and are significantly absent here.

The last two stanzas, which comprise the ending of Book V, deal with conventional elements of formal endings:

> Go, litel book, go litel myn tragedye,
> Ther god thi makere yit, or that he dye,
> So sende myght to make in som comedye!
> But subgit be to alle poesie;
> And kis the steppes, where as thow seest space
> Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.
>
> And for ther is so gret diversite
> In Englissh, and in writyng of oure tonge,
> So prey I god that non myswrite the,
> Ne the mysmetre for defaute of tonge.
> And red whereso thow be, or elles songe,
> That thow be understonde, god I biseche.
> V, 1786-1798

The conceit of "Go, litel book," a formal convention for envoys, has been traced to poets as early as Ovid.[4] The narrator fittingly addresses his "litel book" before his audience in the final closing of the poem. Here, as he closes the action of his last Book, he can dismiss the necessary conventions of paying homage to earlier great poets and plead that he be not miscopied nor misunderstood. The concerns of the poet and narrator have now merged into a single expression because the vision of the narrator has dramatically changed to coincide with that of the poet. The earlier ironies and contradictions implicit in the narrator's commentaries disappear since the narrator has

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[4] John Strong Perry Tatlock, "The Epilog of Chaucer's Troilus," Modern Philology, XVIII (1921), 627-630.

learned what the poet has known about man, love, and God.

Having closed Book V, Chaucer begins to conclude the history of Troilus with the narrator's one-line transition, "But yit to purpose of my rather speche." (V, 1799). The "rather speche" refers to the purpose which he announced in the last proem," . . . the losses of lyf and love yfeere/Of Troilus, be fully shewed here." (IV, 26-27). He has already shown how Criseyde was "unkynde" and how Troilus lost Love and his love; only the death of Troilus remains to be told.

A single stanza briefly summarizes the violent warfare that leads to the death of the hero and the concommitant collapse of Troy. Then a single line telling of his death precedes the final summary:

> Ful pitously hym slough the fierse Achille.
>
> And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
> His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
> Up to the holughnesse of the eighte spere,
> In convers letyng everich element.
> And ther he saugh, wil ful avysement,
> The erratik sterres, herkenyng armonye
> With sownes ful of hevenyssh melodie.
>
> And down from thennes faste he gan avyse
> This litel spot of erthe, that with the se
> Enbraced is, and fully gan despise
> This wrecched world, and held al vanite
> To respect of the pleyn felicite
> That is in hevene above; and at the laste,
> Ther he was slayn, his lokyng down he caste.
>
> And in hym self he lough right at the wo
> Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste,

> And dampned al oure wek that folweth so
> The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste;
> And sholden al oure herte on heven caste.
> And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
> Ther as Mercurye sorted hym to dwelle.
> V, 1807-1827

The terse dismissal of Troilus's death, in contrast to the detailed account of his ascent, evinces the narrator's greater concern for his soul than his body. Free from the constraints with which love, Fortune, and the planets have besieged him, Troilus finds peace and gains insight in his celestial niche.

But the location of Troilus's niche is obscure. Only four manuscripts read "eighthe"; all others read "seventhe."[5] Chaucer's source, however, unquestionably states "ottova," and Root notes the common scribal corruption of vii for viii.[6] Moreover, the line scans badly with the extra syllable of "seventhe" which prevents the elision of the preceding article. The seventh sphere, depending upon whether one counts inward or outward, indicates either Mercury or Saturn, neither of which is appropriate or significant to the theme. Surely Chaucer intended the eighth sphere, but the counting of the spheres so varies in medieval cosmogony that, counting inward, the

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[5]Root, Textual Traditions, pp. 245 ff.

[6]Root, Troilus and Criseyde, p. 561.

reference could mean the moon, or the spot where he was killed "which he could hardly do from the eminence of the outermost sphere," and that the reference to the four layers of elements (V, 1810) indicates Troilus's ascent from the terrestrial regions to the sphere of the moon.[7] But Troilus would have to transcend these terrestrial layers whether he was approaching the moon or continuing to the fixed stars. Figuratively, he could see the spot "ther he was slayn" as well as from the fixed stars as from the moon. Neither does the moon serve any aesthetic or artistic purpose for Chaucer--the sphere of Venus or Mars holds more appropriate significance in this poem than does the moon. In view of the mutability reflected throughout the plot and especially the erratic movement of the fifth book coupled with the persistent image of siege permeating the poem, the stability of the fixed stars and the circumscription of the eighth sphere make clear the propriety and felicity of Chaucer's placement of Troilus.

The cosmic drama which has expressed and influenced Troilus's story is now seen from his new vantage point as a harmonious and unified scheme. His death frees him not only from the siege of Troy, but also from the siege of

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[7] Ibid.

astrological influence and terrestrial ignorance. His is an enlightened soul, and Chaucer implies this enlightenment in the subsequent commentary passage:

> Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love!
> Swich fyn hath al his grete worthynesse!
> Swich fyn hath his estate real above!
> Swich fyn his lust! swich fyn hath his noblesse!
> Swych fyn hath false worldes brothelnesse!
> And thus bigan his lovyng of Criseyde,
> And I have told, and in this wise he deyde.
> V, 1828-1834

The repetition of "Swich fyn" as well as the content of this stanza, concludes the narrative plot. All elements of the theme and aspects of its implied moral are gathered into this single stanza. The manner in which this stanza weaves together threads of the theme which have been implied and explicit throughout the story should be sufficient justification to refute those critics who claim that the conclusion and its accompanying morals are a conventional afterthought, weakening the unity of the poem.

The rhetorical anaphora and the list of particular "fyns" encompass, through ambiguity, many aspects of Chaucer's theme. Although "Swich fyn" might refer to him dying "in this manere," it could also, and in some ways more appropriately, refer to his blissful ascent to the eighth sphere. Troilus's suffering in life and bliss in death are as inseparable as his woe and joy in love. He has been placed in the eighth sphere of the heavens

because of his love's "worthynesse" and "noblesse." Because of the "false worldes brotelnesse" he finds celestial comfort in the fixed stars. If, as Peter Dronke suggests, "Instead of disgust for these lines celebrate Troilus's reward for love, then 'in this wise he deyde' sustains perfectly the complex meaning of 'Swich fyn.' Troilus's love and death and heavenly reward form a unity."[8] Troilus's soul does not, as he envisioned, go to Hades, or even Tartarus or Elysium, but it is placed in the highest heaven open to humans. Nevertheless, although his position is high, he is still denied the beatific vision of God which is accessible to Chaucer's Christian audience.

Now that he has ended his last book and has concluded the narrative, Chaucer has only to bring the poem to a close. He begins with an hortatory address to the audience which stresses the moral implied in his last stanza:

> O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
> In which that love up groweth with youre age,
> Repayreth hom fro wordly vanyte,
> And of youre herte up casteth the visage
> To thilke god that after his ymage
> Yow made, and thynketh al nys but a faire
> This world, that passeth soone as floures faire.
>
> And loveth hym which that right for love
> Upon a cros, oure soules for to beye,
> First starf, and roos, and sit in hevene above;

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[8] Peter Dronke, "The Conclusion of Troilus and Criseyde," Medium Aevum, XXXIII (1964), 49.

> For he nyl falsen no wight, dar I seye,
> That wol his herte al holly on hym leye,
> And syn he best to love is, and most meke,
> What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?
> V, 1835-1849

It has been suggested that this is a sop to contemporary convention and is inconsistent with the sympathetic treatment of courtly love which Chaucer displays in the tale.[9] The narrator has ended only the story with a formal envoy; he is now involved in ending the poem. The purpose of the tale, after all, is to relate the history of Troilus in love. The purpose of the poem is to make that tale meaningful and significant to the audience. The design of the poem has been consistent throughout in showing that the transcience and vanity of earthly love render it undependable in contrast to the fixity of divine love. The Christian moral is obvious, and although it may be perfunctory of Chaucer to explicate it, it is neither inconsistent nor contradictory for him to do so.

Moreover, the stanza is not a denunciation of worldly love but a plea to transcend it. Chaucer (and now the narrator) assumes "that love up groweth" in the "yonge fresshe folkes" of his audience and asks that they cast up their hearts beyond "This world, that passeth soone" yet which remains as beautiful as "floures faire." Love is still

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[9] Cf. ante, p.4

the "lawe of kynde" which binds all things, but lovers should perceive that it also binds these Christians to their God. They may (but do not have to) suffer as Troilus did to discover the enlightenment he experiences after death, and the narrator's own dramatic discovery in the poem serves as demonstration of his awareness of this truth.

This last stanza also serves as a transition from application of the story to love, to the following application of the story to religion in general:

> Lo here, of payens corsed olde rites!
> Lo here, what alle hire goddess may availle!
> Lo here, thise wrecched worldes appetites!
> Lo here, the fyn and guerdoun for traville
> Of Jove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille!
> Lo here, the forms of old clerkes speche
> In poetrie, if ye hire bokes seche!
> V, 1849-1855

Devotion to earthly love and of pagan gods are false. Chaucer has repeatedly shown the influence of pagan deities in the poem, and by showing the end they have wrought in the case of Troilus, he emphasizes the superiority of Christianity. Professor Malone has summarized this idea poignantly:

> It was part of the tragedy of Troilus that he lived in a time and place far from the grace of God, the gift of Jesus Christ to manking. Our virtuous hero had no access, in his life time, to the consolations and the joys of the faithful. He appealed to his gods for help in his misery, but he appealed in vain. Only after death did he win that insight which the

> Christian may win in earthly life. Chaucer rightly lays stress on the part which religion played in the action, even though that part proved negative rather than positive in its effects, since the religion was false and could do nothing for the hero.[10]

Chaucer has shown how Troilus confused the religion of courtly love with his own pagan religion. Certainly, Chaucer's audience was familiar enough with pagan antiquity to believe in the superiority of Christianity. He does not need to remind his audience of that, but he does feel compelled to distinguish between the religion of courtly love and the religion of the true church. To seek eternal bliss in the sensual world, he tells them, is foolish; even the pagans knew it and said so in their books.

The repetition of "Lo here," in this stanza copies the same rhetorical feature of the envoy to the story, "Swich fyn." In addition to the rhetorical effects that such repetition achieves, Chaucer's use of it indicates a stylistic feature reserved for envoys. If only one envoy and one ending had been sufficient for this work, one of these stanzas would have sufficed. But the content of the two stanzas and their intention further show that Chaucer is ending the various elements of his work by stages. All that now remains to be added are two perfunctory

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[10] Malone, op. cit., p. 140.

conventions: a dedication of the poem and a closing, devotional prayer. With the artistic consciousness and accomplishment for which he is admired he fulfills these last obligations:

> O moral Gower, this book I directe
> To the, and to the philosophical Strode,
> To vouchensauf, ther nede is, to correcte,
> Of youre benignites and zeles goode
> And to the sothfast Crist, the starf on rode,
> With al myn herte of mercy evere I preye;
> And to the Lord right thus I speke and seye:
>
> Thow oon, and two, and thre, eterne on lyve,
> That regnest ay in thre, and two, and oon,
> Uncircumscript, and al maist circumscrive,
> Us from visible and invisible foon
> Defende; and to thy mercy everichon,
> So make us, Jesus, for this mercy digne,
> For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne!
> V, 1856-1869

The narrator completes and fulfills his newly discovered cognizance of love by again demonstrating the moral he has preached, for he "casteth the visage/To . . . god" and devotedly dramatizes that he "loveth hym which . . . sit in hevene above."

The narrator's performance, the cosmic drama, the legend of Troy, and the consistent patterns of imagery and illusion have insistently pointed toward this conclusion. Chaucer has implied, demonstrated, and controlled his theme, through those passages voiced by the narrator, to unify his poem and to render his epilogue an intrinsic and necessary development of his eminent masterpiece.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I: Chaucer's Astrology

No attempt to explain medieval astrology is intended here, but rather an attempt to clarify some of the concepts and terminology used in this study.

Planets: Moving outward from the central position of the earth, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn each occupy one sphere apiece, the outermost after Saturn containing the fixed stars. Each of the seven planets embodies particular qualities which influence the fortunes of men under variable circumstances.

Zodiac: Astrologers divide the apparent path of the sun into twelve parts assigning to each a sign which has influences and qualities of its own. Beginning with Aries (the ram), Taurus (the bull), Gemini (the twins), Cancer (the crab), Leo (the lion), and Virgo (the maiden) follow chronologically from March to August.

Mansions: Each sign is the "house" of one of the planets where the combined qualities of the planet and the sign exert their strongest influence. The Sun and Moon have one house each; the other planets have two. Aries is the house of Mars, Taurus, of Venus, Gemini, of Mercury, Cancer, of the Moon, Leo, of

the Sun, and Virgo, the second house of Mercury. Mansions should not be confused with "mundane houses," which involve an extremely complicated and entirely different system of determining dignity and debility.

Dignity and debility: The position of the planets in the zodiac also determines the strength or weakness of the influential qualities regardless whether those qualities are benevolent or malign. Thus, the houses become the exaltation, detriment, and fall of each planet. Aries, for example, is the house of Mars, the exaltation of the Sun, the detriment of Venus, and the fall of Saturn; Cancer is the fall of Mars and Virgo is the fall of Venus.

Conjunction: When two planets pass each other within half the distance of the sum of their diameters, their influence is strongest--good for planets having benign qualities, malefic for planets having malign qualities.

Genethlaic and horary Astrology: Genethliac astrology, the determination of a person's character and fortunes from knowing the planetary situation at the moment of his birth, and horary astrology, the art of determining suitable times for various undertakings, are the two branches of judicial astrology.